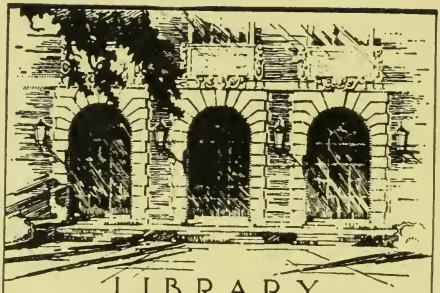

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THE

MARRIED UNMARRIED

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "ALMACK'S REVISITED."

P'art good, more bad, some neither one nor t'other.

MARTIAL EPIGRAM.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON

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1837.

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DEDICATION

TO THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON.

Accept, I beg, the dedication of the following volumes, as an imperfect tribute of respect, both to the talent displayed in your own fascinating productions, and to the kindness you invariably extend to those, who devote themselves to literature and the arts.

THE AUTHOR.

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MARRIED UNMARRIED.

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If the reader have the patience to follow me to the end of these volumes, it may perhaps be in my power to unravel some portion of the veil of mystery which enveloped my youth. For the present, I must be permitted to speak of myself as I have been, and leave time to disclose what

I am. Indeed, if it were any way important that I should narrate the incidents of my dawning life, this would be impossible. The feeble light of my memory either totally fails me, or, as it here and there penetrates through the glimmerings of childhood, it leaves the associations of my mind as vague and uncertain as distant objects seen through the dim haze of declining twilight.

Alas! how often in my hours of sorrow and loneliness have I prayed that I could realise some of the fair visions that have flashed before my sight, like luminous coruscations upon the dark vault of heaven! How often have I regretted the imperfection of our nature, which either obliterates the early past, as though it never had been, or limits our recollections of persons and events to more advanced age, and thus expunges from our minds the endearing recollections of those happy days when all around breathes of hope, tenderness, and innocent affection—those days, when, without cares, mistrust, alarms, or jealousies, we cling with infantine ardour to the fond hands that guide and protect

our steps, or fly to the shelter of those beloved bosoms that are too soon and too often doomed to be torn from us by death, misfortune, or perhaps by treachery—worse than death. Days, when we love those that Providence has connected with us, for no other motive, but that they are our kindred—when the word brother brings home to the heart all the purest delights of mutual friendship and regard—when the still tenderer epithet of sister bears no other meaning than confidence and love, and when the names of our parents are associated with all those delicious dreams of home and happiness, than which life has nothing more joyous, the world nothing more attractive.

But I talk of these sensations as if they had been familiar to me. Alas! such has not been my lot. 'Tis true that in searching deeply into the past—in attempting to collect the scattered fragments of my memory, I have seen, or fancied that I saw, the dim outline of a graceful and noble countenance, beaming upon me with all the pride and fondness with which man regards his first-born. I have remembered, or imagined

that I remembered, a woman, fair and gentle as the evening light, bending over my infant slumbers, and that I have still felt the warm throbbing of her maternal heart, as she pressed me to her bosom, whilst, reclining upon her lap, I toyed with the glittering ornaments that adorned her neck, or played with the glossy tresses that fell in ringlets from her brow. The distant echo of those endearments that fond parents lavish upon beloved children has resounded in my ears, and my lips have mechanically repeated those first efforts at connected sounds, which, methought, I had lisped in earliest infancy. There have risen, too, before me, in confused succession, the brilliancy of splendid lustres, the waving of costly hangings, the sparkling of jewels, the rattling of equipages, and the prancing of steeds—but these were momentary visions; dreams without sense or connexion, which flitted instantly away and left my mind in darkness and uncertainty.

In the cottage in which I was brought up, there was a man whom I called father, but he was not my parent: there was a woman also

whom I addressed as mother. but I was not her child. I had brothers too, (for they had sons,) but they were not of my blood; nor could I love the first as children ought to love their parents, nor cleave to the others as brothers should cleave one to the other. Strange instinct of our nature, for I knew no other ties! Whose I was I could not tell, but theirs I knew I was not; nor did they endeavour to conceal this from me.

Before I had attained my eighth year, I ascertained that I had neither father nor mother, that I was an orphan, the offspring perhaps of guilt or misfortune, abandoned probably to the fate that awaits so many poor victims of frailty and delusion.

In the situation destiny had placed me I had, however, no pretext for complaint. My foster-father, whose habitation was seated within a stone's throw of the ocean, in a secluded port upon the western coast of England, was, by profession, a pilot and fisherman of the more prosperous and better class; an industrious, devout man, though dissenting from the esta-

blished church. There I partook of the same fare, wore the same sort of clothes, shared the same couch, and participated in the same rough labours, as the rest of the family. Besides, I had never known a softer life than that which fell to the lot of the hardy race around me, nor ever imagined that my condition could be ameliorated. The conduct of the good man was also as kind as his rugged nature permitted, and, although he might have been less affectionate, he was not more severe to me than to his own offspring, and often interfered in my behalf with his wife, with whom I was no favourite. Indeed, in one or two instances, a certain preference seemed to be shown in his conduct towards me, for, whilst the other children were left to revel in idleness, or, as they advanced in boyhood, were solely engaged in labour, I was sent to the village day-school, and had already considerably advanced in the rudiments before my little companions of riper years had yet been initiated into their first mysteries.

I was, moreover, directed to attend divine service regularly at the parish church, and,

having a natural taste for music, was enrolled amongst the band of juvenile choristers, whose nasal flats and squeaking trebles were put into requisition to give breathing time to the clergyman, much to the discomfiture not only of Sternhold and Hopkins, but to that of the under-sheriff's daughters; who having been to an assize concert at Exeter, thought themselves entitled to show off their knowledge of the fashionable world by sitting down during the psalms and hymns, and giggling after a very irreverent fashion, or standing up merely to show that their white teeth were set on edge by our inharmonious efforts.

What the cause of these exceptions might be, I neither knew nor cared. As to the church, spiritless and dull as the sermons were, I liked them better than the incomprehensible outpourings of the preacher at the meeting-house, whose doctrine of faith and not works formed a very pretty antithesis to the measures, and not men, of later times. Besides, two old maiden ladies, sisters of Mr. Steers, a rival attorney, took great interest in my choral exertions, and

always rewarded me with a penny bun and a glass of cider upon Sundays—a spice of generosity that arose partly from their jealousy of the budding beauties of the under-sheriff's daughters, and partly from revenge at the father of the latter having cut their brother out of that office, and perhaps also, from our noise bearing a much stronger affinity to the mewing of their own favourite cats, than to anything that corresponded with the clerk's invitation "to sing unto the Lord."

As to school—with the ordinary disinclination of youth to restraint, I at first thought it a great hardship. As I took up my satchel to hurry to my lessons, I envied the other village lads, most of whom, when released from toil, joyously assembled to divert themselves amongst the boats hauled up on the beach; or in boisterous weather resorted to the shelter of the churchyard, where, amid the tombstones that marked the last humble resting-places of their relatives, they amused themselves either by tormenting the tinker's donkey, which was permitted to luxuriate upon the thistles and rank herbage, or by

fighting and revelling over the graves, as heedless of the mortal dust beneath, as though it had been the ocean's sand. Before long, however, the natural bent of my mind, and perhaps an instinctive insight into futurity, led me to consider this coercion in a different light, and I was not a little proud or tenacious of my privilege. Heaven knows, how often since then, I have blessed the care that impelled me to embrace instruction, as a mighty benefit, and to regard it as the only lever by which the genius of man can be raised above the instinct of the brute, and which, if rightly applied, is the greatest source of consolation and independence that can be bestowed upon our imperfect nature.

The preference shown to me in regard to these matters did not, however, pass unheeded either by our neighbours or our own family. Some of the pilot's friends, honest fellows, who deemed all knowledge beyond that of the compass or the trimming of a vessel as utterly superfluous, blamed him for throwing away his money in spoiling a promising hand, and jeered him for letting them load me with a lot of lumber that

could be of no use in the way of my business. Others, envious of his prosperity, accused him of an ambitious and unnatural desire to bring me up as a gentleman, to the disparagement of his own children—a clamour in which they were joined by the latter, who, although they evinced themselves, but little disposition for learning, were jealous of seeing my progress, and still more envious of the old ladies' buns and cider. Squire Oxover, the lord of the manor, aided by his wife, also remonstrated.

Glorying in those high church and tory principles, that marked the goodly times of rotten boroughs and municipal corruption, this worthy, who was knight of the shire, and whose estates embraced a large portion of the neighbouring land as well as the village, limited his notions of what was essential for the moral and political exigencies of the lower classes, and for the education of the people, to a strict observance of the following unities.

In the first place, in regard to all election matters, for insignificant as the village was it returned two members to parliament, he exacted

implicit obedience to his mandates from all persons within range of his influence, and pitilessly ejected or persecuted all those who ventured to oppose his will, no matter what their conscience or their creed. As to conscience in political matters, he laid down as an incontrovertible axiom, that the people were not entitled to the free exercise of theirs, but that all landlords had as undoubted a right to command the votes of their tenantry as the feudal barons had to exact the bodily service of their retainers; and, if he could not obtain his object either by menace or bribery, that he was fully justified in wreaking his vengeance upon them by every possible artifice that his own ingenuity or the malice of his attorney could suggest. As to creed, he considered that there could only be one faith, and one dogma in the world, namely, that of the Church of England. Not such as the first reformists would have handed it down, a beautiful Christian fabric, purified from the abuses and exactions as well as the superstitions and tyranny of the mother faith, but such as it has grown up—fat, pampered, and extortionate;

too often falling into a dangerous quietism, and no less often evincing a cold indifference to all but the maintenance of those temporal privileges and the extension of those pluralities and exclusions, which, in lieu of strengthening its influence, have diminished the number of its votaries, and created enemies amidst those, who, under a more liberal and disinterested ecclesiastical administration, would perhaps have continued amongst its warmest adherents.

The second point, upon which the squire was equally tenacious, was the rigid execution of the Game Laws. The slightest infringement of this code was, in his opinion, a more heinous rebellion against Church and State, than the gravest infraction of the ten commandments. It signified little, whether a man blasphemed, gambled, dishonoured his parents, sold his own wife or purloined that of another; whether he broke the sabbath or robbed the public, providing he did not rob his preserves. He was not altogether satisfied that the severity of the criminal law might not be modified as regarded sheep-stealing, and he had his doubts about forgery;

but to snare a hare, or destroy a pheasant, was an offence that could only be expiated by sending the culprit to improve his skill in *venerie* by catching kangaroos at Botany Bay. For the guilty villain who, after plundering the confiding merchant, the distressed widow, or unbefriended orphan, ended a life of fraud and profligacy by a death of ignominy, or who eluded the vengeance of the laws by absconding to America, he could find compassion—but the poacher was a wretch, who neither deserved benefit of council or clergy. Therefore, whenever a delinquent of this description fell into his hands, he not only exercised his power as a magistrate by committing him to prison, but spared no pains to convert his preliminary punishment into ultimate transportation; reckless whether the destitute wife and children were cast upon the parish, or were driven to the commission of worse crimes.

It was not his fault, however, if the neighbouring peasantry remained ignorant of the danger of infringing the sanctity of these statutes. For not only were his copses and plantations beset with dog spikes, and other defences

against biped and quadruped marauders, but the boundaries of his estates were studded with groves of neatly painted posts, inscribed with such benevolent warnings as, "Steel-traps and spring-guns are set here."—"No thoroughfare."—"All dogs will be shot."—and "All trespassers prosecuted according to law." And why was all this vigilance exerted? Was it to enable him to afford frequent recreation to his friends, by regaling them with the lusty pleasures of the chase, such as it ought to be, and such as it was in earlier times, or was it to offer a compensation to the farmers for the devastation committed on their crops by these privileged favourites? No, it was that he might reserve the whole for one or two days' effeminate massacre, when the poor tame birds that had almost eaten out of his hands were slaughtered by hundreds as they rose lazily on the wing, astounded by the unwonted din of fire-arms, beaters, and dogs, but still confident in the protection of their native woods.

The third question, upon which the squire had imbibed immutable notions, was not only

that a little knowledge was a dangerous thing, but that any knowledge whatever in the lower classes was an encroachment upon the privileges of the aristocracy, essentially tending to make them bad subjects and worse tenants, and only calculated to convert plough-boys into attorneys, and dairy-maids into something much worse. He thought that Providence, in its bounty, had created these classes for no other purpose than to work with their hands, and not with their heads, and that ignorance was bliss to them, and a blessing to the community. He argued that they had no more right to the enjoyment of their reasoning faculties than his sleek teams of Devon oxen, and that instruction, instead of instilling sentiments of virtuous emulation and industry into their minds, was but a medium for inspiring them with dissatisfaction, vice, and sedition. "It teaches the people," said he, "to abandon the mechanical routine of that existence for which they were evidently brought into the world, and to aspire to things never intended to fall within their sphere. It leads them to talk of rights to which they had

no natural title—to thirst after visionary amendments, which are but a subversion of all social order—and, what is infinitely more perilous, it induces them to imagine that if they had but a fair chance, they might become as good in God's eyes as their betters; and to believe that the beautiful institutions of their country open to its sons, if diligent, talented, and well-conducted, paths to honour and advancement, which may lead the lowest to a level with the most exalted."

Notwithstanding the squire's repugnance to the diffusion of knowledge, he, or rather his wife, for of the two, the grey mare was the faster, if not the better horse, had fallen into the fashionable mania, of dressing up a show school at one of the cottages bordering upon their park. This had cost him more than one pang. Nor would he have given his sanction, had he not been moved partly by jealousy of a neighbouring gentleman, who not only patronised the village seminary, but wisely and humanely devoted a portion of his income to the instruction and improvement of the surrounding peasantry, and partly from the vanity of seeing his troop of

juvenile dependents paraded in blue and orange vestments in the aisle of the church upon Sundays, where they were directed to bob, curtsey, and scream Hallelujah! as his honour, preceded by the beadle, progressed towards the family pew.

Fortunately for me, the squire's observations had as little effect upon my foster-father, as the gibes of his humbler acquaintance, or the scolding of his wife. He turned his quid quietly in his mouth, and told the one, that I was a good lad that would wrong no man, though, may be, I was a bit of a scholar; and he less patiently bid the others attend to their own affairs, and leave him to do as he pleased with his own family, where, as long as he lived, he would be master. I was consequently permitted to attend to my lessons, and did my best to profit by them. This, however, did not exempt me from labour.

Whilst too young to go aboard with the pilot's elder sons, who attended him in his arduous vocation, I assisted the younger in caulking and refitting the lugger when she came into

harbour, in clearing and repairing the nets when he was absent, or in aiding our mother to cultivate a small garden attached to the house. When I had attained my tenth year, however, I not only made several fishing trips, but now and then accompanied my foster-father in his cruises down channel. I was thus early inured to hardships, dangers, and fatigues. I had seen the ocean and the heavens, in all the sublime majesty of their wildest fury, as the awful thunder burst upon our very bosoms, or as our lugger scudded along under bare poles before the tempest, and learned, if not to overcome their terrors, at least to despise them. The sea soon became as it were my element, and its waters almost as familiar as the dry land; so that I did not hesitate to throw myself into its waves even in stormy weather, and to revel in its foaming billows as though they were my bed. And yet with all this, I felt no vocation for a seafaring life. I did what was required of me with alacrity, because it was useless to repine; but, although I was too young to form any plan for my future life, my heart recoiled within me when the

pilot first talked of binding me 'prentice to one of his own profession at Torbay, or observed, that, as I was a smartish scholar, and could sing psalms and play the fiddle, he would put me aboard Lord Gambier's flag-ship, where his brother was purser's steward, and where my learning would no doubt soon procure me advancement in the same line.

In the meantime, although not naturally of a robust frame, I grew up strong and active. Few boys were more expert at the games of our age, and I had, moreover, made myself respected by giving a sound drubbing to three or four lads, bigger than myself, who taunted me about my equivocal birth—taunts, by-the-bye, which I knew not then to answer by telling them that in England, the boasted land of morality, an immense portion of the population was in the same unhappy condition as myself; but which I often retorted by mimicking their voices and their gait, and taking off any little singularities that nature or accident had inflicted upon them. For, independent of playing upon the fiddle in a manner little common at my age,

I had a particular turn for this kind of caricature, and, although I was straight-limbed, and certainly more than ordinarily good-looking, I could throw my body into the strangest contortions, pull faces with the ugliest grinner at the village revels, and imitate the actions of a frog or monkey with almost as much agility as a professional mimic.

This talent seduced me, however, into more than one scrape, and indeed brought upon me the wrath of Squire Oxover, to whom I had taken a mortal antipathy, not on account of his meddling with my schooling, but because he ordered me to be locked up for twenty-four hours in the cage, and was only prevented from committing me to the county jail by the intercession of his brother magistrates, who pleaded for my youth, and could scarcely refrain from laughter at the evidence of my transgression.

The head of my delinquency was my having taken the following liberty with that of his worship. Having strolled one fine autumn evening near the plantations that fringed the village, and not having the fear of dog-spikes or keepers

before me, I was tempted to creep through the fence, and to climb to the top of one of the "No trespass" boards, on which I fixed a turnip that I had purloined from near its foot, and fashioned into an excellent likeness of the squire's face, ornamenting it with an oakum wig, two blackberry eyes, and staining the sides with the same fruit to give them a stronger resemblance to his worship's rubicund cheeks. Proud of my prank, I was about to descend from my perch, when I was pounced upon by one of the keepers, and dragged, together with the *corpus*, or rather, *caput delicti*, before the squire, who, after diving for a while into his sole book of knowledge, "Burn's Justice," forthwith consigned me to durance as a trespasser.

Although I had often had full leisure at church to examine the squire's face, as he indulged in his usual pious habit of sleeping during the sermon, I had never before thought of exercising my powers of mimicry upon so exalted a personage, but the cage put me upon my mettle, and emboldened me to a trial. Returning from school a day or two after, I saw a number of

fisher-boys and idlers assembled in the churchyard, where they were amusing themselves by pelting the old sexton with some of the mortal relics which he was carelessly ejecting from a fresh-made grave. They no sooner espied me than a dozen voices exclaimed, "Jack Penguin," —for that, reader, was the name I went by,— "Jack, ahoy!—avast, and show us the cut of the squire's jib when he boused you up in limbo."

"I don't care if I do show you how he trims his cross jack-yard," replied I, "and warps into church, if you'll lend me a hand."

Upon this, I ranged them on either side the porch, in imitation of the blue and orange school; and then, protruding my stomach, bowing out my knees, cocking my hat, inflating my cheeks, and twisting my eyes into a terrible squint, I waddled up the aisle, and seated myself in the feudal pew. I then went through all the motions of its owner; bowed as he bowed at certain portions of the Scriptures, turned up my eye to the cieling at others, as though I had been coquetting with some of the plaster che-

rubim which ornamented the mullions and rafters, and imitated the loud, indecorous twang with which he was wont to drown the voice of clergyman and clerk during the responses. Then changing my voice to that of the former—shame be upon me for it—I gave out as a text, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image," and then resuming the squire's face, pretended to fall asleep, and to snore as if the whole be-devilled herd of swine had risen from the deep, and entered into my body.

I was quickly aroused, however, from my mock slumber, and this after no agreeable fashion; for the lash of a riding-whip, that would have done honour to the knout of a Russian executioner, nearly cut off the hand on which I was reclining, and, upon looking up, who should I see, but the squire and clergyman, who had witnessed my irreverent pranks from the vestry-room, where they had been settling with the churchwardens the amount of a new rate to be levied upon the parish.

Before I had time to make my escape through the arch formed by the squire's bow legs, I was

regaled by the vicar with a score of stripes, brothers of the first-born, accompanied by a volley of oaths from his honour, that was enough to have startled the aforesaid cherubim from their perches.

However, although I had been making game of them, as my offence did not come within the game-laws, and as it was decided that no charge for trespass, sacrilege, or theft, could be made out against me, since the church doors were open, no service going on, and I had appropriated nothing but his worship's squint, I was allowed to slink off with the consolatory assurance, that if I did not mend my manners I should be turned out of the parish, or delivered over to a press-gang.

These pranks, of course, placed me under the ban of the great folks at the hall, as well as that of the Rev. Mr. Scentwell, the vicar, who was not only a near relation and great favourite —two things by no means synonymous—but a hard rider, a still harder drinker, a good hand at whist, and a mortal enemy to all learning, save that inculcated by the Sporting Magazine, Da-

niel's Field Sports, and Hoyle. A too earnest devotion to these excellent productions had twice brought him to a check, a very polite *liceat migrare* having cut off his chances of obtaining a first degree at Oxford, and a less courteous rustication having prevented his becoming senior wrangler at Cambridge. However, this no ways militated against his ordination by his uncle, the bishop of the diocese, nor offered any impediment to his prospect of converting his loose boxes into a prebendal stall.

I was, however, consoled in some measure for my stripes and disgrace by finding that I had not fallen in the opinion of the only friend I had on earth, my foster-father, who, though he rated me soundly, and said I merited the horsewhipping for selecting such a spot for the theatre of my waggery, nevertheless laughed heartily at my account of the transaction, and often encouraged me to re-enact the scene of the squire and the vicar, between whom and himself there had long existed the utmost ill-will. The cause of this feud arose, firstly, from the pilot and his sons having zealously exerted themselves to oppose the

squire's nomination at the last election, wearing their adversary's colours, canvassing for him, and rigging up a small boat as a triumphal car for his chairing. Secondly, because he had told the vicar that he might send and take his tithe of fish or flesh an' he pleased, but that as he was a dissenter, and never benefited by the reverend gentleman's services or church, he would neither pay tithe nor rate of his own free will.

Consequently, the squire not only instructed his attorney to keep a sharp look-out, and, if possible, to implicate him in a charge of smuggling with his brothers-in-law, who were noted as loose characters, but exerted the whole weight of his interest with his friends at the Admiralty to contrive some means of injuring the offender, whom he represented as a dangerous, fanatical non-conformist, not less ill-disposed to the king than he was to the church. By way of a bribe to their lordships, he invited them to a grand *battue* at the hall, which they accepted under plea of an official visit to the coast.

These benevolent intentions only failed, as

the French lawyers say, from one or two circumstances entirely independent of his will. For, on the one hand, although their lordships had offered to promote his son over the heads of more deserving and meritorious officers, in return for the vigorous manner in which the father and the members he returned had supported a recent job in their department, they showed little disposition to persecute an old seaman, because he chose to worship the Almighty after his own conscience, and to vote for an opposition member; whom, to tell the truth, the government was anxious to win over;—a motive more powerful with them, perhaps, than any scruples of abstract justice. They consequently slaughtered the squire's pheasants, devoured his venison, did copious honour to his claret, and re-embarked in the Admiralty yacht, saying they would give instructions to have the pilot sharply looked after by the cruisers upon the station.

On the other hand, my foster-father was too honest to commit a fraud on any one, either public or private, however much he was resolved

to resist what he thought was an arbitrary exaction upon the part of the incumbent.

This reverend gentleman, who usually devoted his winters to hunting in Leicestershire, where he held another living, his summers to diluting his wine with Bath waters, and his autumns to shooting on the squire's manors, abandoning his flocks, in the meantime, to the care of their heavenly pastor, or to that of some ill-paid neighbouring curate, was more successful in his mode of annoyance; for the refusal to pay the rates was met by a process in the ecclesiastical court, which, under the direction of the squire's attorney, soon ran up the costs and expenses from a few shillings to four times as many pounds; and would have ended by the seizure of the pilot's vessel and goods, had not a retired naval officer advanced him the money necessary to meet the benevolent method adopted by the church to reclaim its stray sheep, or rather its truant shillings.

The result of all this, however, was, that in a village where every householder was dependent or stood in awe of our enemy, my foster-father

gradually lost much of his custom, and was branded by the squire, parson, attorney, apothecary, churchwardens, and innkeeper, for whom he had refused to smuggle a keg of schiedam, as a rebel against God and the king. For, out of deference to his honour, they affirmed that the attributes of the Divinity and Crown were as closely linked as the "*Dieu et mon droit*" of the royal motto; and, consequently, that any man who supported an opponent to government opposed the king's majesty; and he who refused to go to the parish church, and to pay its rates, revolted against both God and king.

Although I was particularly attentive to divine service, and assiduous at my book, and was the only boy that had any pretension to a musical voice, the vicar directed me to be turned out of the list of singers, saying, that I always sang false, and spoiled what he called "the cry of the pack,"—a condemnation in which he was backed by the under-sheriff's daughters, whose father declared that I was a wicked, ill-disposed imp, whose irreverent conduct was calculated to elevate me to a more dangerous post than that on which I had affixed the turnip.

How singular are the associations of our minds! how trifling the incidents that produce the greatest revolutions, not only in science and politics, but in our social and individual economy! To the plucking of one apple we trace back the immense catalogue of miseries, sins, and afflictions which are the sorrowful heritage of our abased condition: to the mere falling of another, is ascribed one of the the greatest discoveries that has enlightened natural philosophy.

The upheaving of a boiling kettle is said to have first unveiled the mighty powers and benefits of steam, and the accidental friction of a little charcoal, on which a poor fisherman had let fall a few grains of coarse salt, produced that terrible agency through which crowns have been wrested from the heads of the mightiest kings, and empires obtained for low-born men, whose origin never seemed intended to raise them above the common level. A lady's garter gave the first impulse to those chivalrous institutions, the indiscriminate abuse of which, by modern sovereigns, has thrown so much dis-

credit upon distinctions, which were formerly the undivided recompense of honour, valour, and talent. A lady's glove had almost put an end to the negotiations by which a bloody war was eventually terminated at Utrecht, and the colour of a rose was the symbol of those frightful civil discords that so long racked the heart of our own country. One might enumerate a thousand instances equally striking. Be this as it may—never since that time have I been able to pass a greengrocer's stall or to look upon one of the innocent vegetables which first brought me acquainted with loss of liberty, without feeling a rising in my throat and connecting it with my earliest impressions of injustice and oppression. I verily believe that if we had still lived in the days of chivalry, I should have emblazoned a turnip upon my shield, with the motto, "No trespass," and ridden forth to the rescue under its stimulating influence. At a later period I was in one way enabled to indulge my propensity by having this engraved upon a seal; an indulgence that had nigh thrown me into trouble, as will be shown hereafter.

CHAPTER II.

A merry Christmas, and a happy New year—There are many slips between the cup and the lip—In the midst of life we are in death—I am left without a friend except the house dog—The Vicar objects to bury a dissenter, so the dissenters bury the clerk.

For some time nothing occurred to vary our mode of life. With the exception of one or two pranks, such as letting down a thread with a fish-hook at the end of it, from the gallery during evening service, which hitched in the churchwarden's wig, so that it came off and dangled in the air when he knelt down for the Lord's Prayer, and set the whole congregation a-tittering,—and affixing, upon another occasion, a piece of paper with "no trespass," written upon

it, under the under-sheriff's coat collar, I was not guilty of any particular mischief. Whilst on the other hand I acquired great praise from another feat which had nearly cost me my life. As I was sitting playing the fiddle in our cottage, I heard the mewing of a cat, and the loud laughter of some of the lads on the jetty, and thought they were mocking me, but on looking up I saw they were tormenting Miss Steers' favourite tortoise-shell. So up I jumped, ran out and remonstrated. But the result of my intercession only increased the sufferings of the animal, until at last one of the lads seized the poor brute by the tail and cast it into the water. Although it was blowing fresh, with a heavy swell, I did not hesitate a moment, but threw myself off the jetty and succeeded in seizing her by the back, and putting her on my shoulder, where she held on with such instinctive tenacity as made my neck suffer not a little. Unfortunately, the tide was ebbing, and although I could swim like a fish I could not make head, and was carried away nearly to the mouth of the harbour, where I should have been drowned, had not one of the fishing lug-

gers, then coming in, picked me up. As soon as I had recovered and got ashore, I started off with the cat to Miss Steers, who evinced the utmost thankfulness and rewarded me with half-a-crown. This act of mine was not forgotten by them, as will be seen the sequel.

The month of December, which had been more than usually gloomy, was drawing to a close, and brought with it a succession of heavy south-westerly gales, not only rendering it impossible for a single boat to leave the harbour, but driving the channel cruisers from their stations and strewing the coast with wreck and devastation. Never had so rich a harvest been reaped by the inhuman wretches, whose odious industry disgraces our western shores—never had the adjacent church bells so often tolled the ill-fated mariner's departing dirge.

It was Christmas Eve—the season of rejoicing and benevolence to the rich, of consolation to the poor, and of thanksgiving to the christian. Already the clerk and sexton had bedecked the pews and windows of the church with a profusion of those blooming evergreens

that are the symbol of eternity. Already the village maiden cast a bashful but not unwilling eye upon the privileged misseltoe, suspended from the cottage rafters. Not only had each good housewife prepared a store of that honest English cheer, which is so identified with our usages, as to form part of our nationality, if not of our religion; but the poorest cottagers were made participators in the contentment of the more prosperous, by receiving donations of fuel and other comforts, so essential at this dreary season. Sounds of merriment already resounded from many a hearth, and groups of children, relatives, and friends, pressed around each other, eagerly awaiting the blessing and the welcome of the morrow's feast. As none of our craft were at sea, and as no ship was seen off the coast, no wife bewailed the absence of her husband, nor trembled for the safety of her son; and, although the tempest howled fearfully, and the sea broke mountains high upon the shingly strand, there was nothing to mar the general happiness.

The debt my foster-father had contracted

from the monstrous expenses incurred by his litigation with the vicar, had been a sore vexation, that not only weighed heavily upon his mind, but curtailed us of many of our essential comforts. Nevertheless we were not unprepared to do honour to the coming day, and as I and the other lads nestled in the low settles that we had drawn around the kitchen fire, we winked with longing eyes and watering mouths at the huge plum-pudding and noble piece of beef that stood upon the dresser, in readiness for the oven, backed by bright rows of well-polished pewter and snow-white crockery, interspersed with sprigs of holly. Although none of us youngsters felt with becoming solemnity the moral cause of this addition to our usual humble fare, its savoury odour came home to our physical senses with irresistible force. After giggling and nudging each other with our elbows, and often rising to take a nearer view, we burst into exclamations of "Well, I wish it were past church-time to-morrow, and dang me if squire himself wouldn't give a sack of rabbits for a slice."

There was something, however, in the pilot's manner that evening that was not usual with him, accustomed as he was to hear the raging elements vainly expend their fury upon his snug habitation, and to face them with reckless indifference upon the waters. He walked to and fro, lending an anxious ear to each succeeding blast, frequently shaking his head and exclaiming, "A sad night, a sad night, for them at sea. Many's the brave hand whose glass is nearly run;—but God's will be done. A man can die but once, and when it's the turn of this old hulk to be paid off, by his blessing, I shall not fall to leeward."

"His name be praised," responded his wife, "that neither thou nor any of the lads be out this night. Woe to her that has a soul she loves afloat in such a gale as this."

"Hark!" said her husband, raising his hand to silence her, "hark! I hear a signal gun."

We all listened with breathless eagerness for a few minutes, and I crept softly to the outer door to watch for a renewal of the flash. But he had been deceived. It was but the hollow

thunder of the ocean against the planking of the jetty.

"Well, well," said he tapping the barometer that hung upon the wall between a portrait of Duncan and Howe, "unless my mind misgives me, there will be merry work for the shell-fish afore daylight."

"I doubt but what there will, father," added his eldest son, who entered whilst he was speaking, pale and apparently much agitated.

"What Bill," exclaimed his mother, observing his emotion, "has't had thy Christmas-box already? I warrant me thou'st been taking misseltoe leave already with Bessy Bar-Maid's rosy cheeks; that's not fair, you know, afore twelve o'clock, and a clout from Bessy's hand's enough to unship a steadier rudder than thy head."

"Why thou stand'st a-staring like squire's turnip noddle upon trespass post," exclaimed one of the other lads; "hast seen a dobie?"

"I have seen enough," retorted the elder boy, "to make thy teeth chatter as tho'f they were a frost-bitten."

Upon this we all fell to laughing and exclaimed "A yarn! come, Bill, veer away and tell us what hast seen?"

"Yarn or no yarn," rejoined he, "it's no laughing matter mayhap for some of us; for as I hove round by the churchyard wall, there was the sexton's warning a dancing and flashing about the old yew-tree as bright as the fire in that grate."

"What, close to where poor Jem was laid?" demanded the pilot with earnestness.

"Yes, father, three of them; I seed three lights as plain as I see that candle."

"I never set eyes on 'em myself," observed the pilot, "but there's many a one that has, and folks do say they bodes no good to those that cross 'em."

"Folks says, father, they never flare nor flicker near a grave but it's a call to kith or kin of them that's moored below."

"How can'st talk such nonsense, lad?" said their mother, a woman of strong mind, and superior to the common superstitions of her class; "the only lights thou hast seen are those down

at Lion-tap; it's the cider's a dancing in thy head—nothing else."

"Thou may'st make light o' such warnings if thee please, mother," rejoined the son mildly, "but there's ould Giles, that's been sexton, man and boy, for more than fifty years; told me that them lights was never seen by mortal eye, but what he was found grubbing away with pick and spade on a new grave, upon next day's sun-down. It's all one like as a warning to him."

"Thou would'st do better, Will, to take warning by the old tippler's drunken ways and bottled nose, and not spend so much o' thy time o' nights with thy own over the tankard. Why, since thou'st been a courting Bessy, thee doesn't know the lugger's mast from the church steeple."

"May-be, mother," retorted the other, "but every flame must have its wick, as ould Giles says, and mayhap three of ours will be burned out afore yon yule pie's browned at baker's."

"Come, Bill," replied his mother somewhat sharply, "such flights as these is not fitting for

Christmas Eve; if thee be'st flustered and can't talk reason, thee'dst better go to bed."

"Mother," rejoined the son mournfully, "I ben't no more flustered than father there: what I says is true as gospel. As sure as you be sitting there, I see'd the warning a flickering and flourishing round the tree, and then bob down and settle close to brother Jemmie's head-stone."

The pilot, who had been listening with more attention than he was wont to pay to the recital of similar superstitions, now put an end to the conversation by saying, "As God giveth so can he take away. His ways and warnings shall no man question. But come, Jack, boy, let us have a spell at the Bible, and then to bed; for if the gale holds on o' this fashion, we may be wanted afore morning." Then turning over the sacred volume, he bade me read the 27th chapter of Acts, wherein the apostle Paul describes the delivery of himself and fellow passengers after his ship struck, "some by swimming, and the rest, some on boards and some on broken pieces of the ship, so it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land."

Having terminated this the last verse, I closed the book, and for a short time there was a dead silence, when the pilot rose, and extending his hands over us all, as we sat close together near the table, exclaimed in a fervent manner, "Thou, Jenny, hast been a loving wife and mother to me and mine, and thee, boys, one and all, hast been a joy and comfort to my grey hairs. Bless thee! and if the warnings Bill has seen prove true, may He who protects the widow and friendless look down upon thee!—O, merciful Lord!" added he with still greater solemnity, "deliver us out of the deep waters. Let not the water-floods drown us, neither let the deep swallow us up."

A simultaneous Amen! was uttered by us all, as the good man, dashing a tear from his eye, retired to rest.

It was in truth an awful night, such as had never been exceeded in the memory of the oldest seaman. It was such a night, too, as I had never passed before, and which left a profound impression upon my mind. Dreams and night-mares of a horrid nature tormented me.

At one moment, I fancied myself at sea, assailed by a fearful storm — our lugger, overwhelmed by a huge wave, foundered, and I was borne down, bruised and suffocated, amidst the boiling scum of waters. In another minute, I stood alone in the churchyard, near the old yew-tree, and the sexton's warning danced and flared around my head, and scorched my very face, and then all was pitchy darkness. Then again, the blue, pale light burst forth from poor Jemmy's grave, and it opened, and he rose and came to me, and threw his cold arms around me. I struggled and tried to fly, but was nailed to the very ground. And presently, I broke away into the church, and fell upon my knees, and prayed by the communion-table, and I looked up and saw three half-mouldered bodies hanging over me, and the horrid worms crept out from their eyes, mouth, and nostrils; and the noisome creatures, bred of man's corruption, revelled and twisted there; some dropped upon me, and coiled and sported upon my breast—huge, monstrous, revolting brutes, cold as eternal ice, and long and heavy as five fa-

thoms of our biggest cable. And then again I stood alone, hungry, friendless, and shivering with cold, and begging for a crust of bread at the squire's door, and the keepers let loose their bull-dogs at me, and I fled, bounding, bounding over the ground as though I had wings, until at last I tumbled over a precipice into a new-made grave, and the loose earth fell upon me. Then, thank God, I awoke, but trembling and terrified, and hid my head beneath the clothes.

Day at length dawned, but, in lieu of bringing an abatement of the storm, the wind increased to a perfect hurricane; and, as the partial light fell upon the distant waters, a large square-rigged vessel, supposed to be an Indiaman, was seen embayed between the two headlands, that beetled high above the ocean to the east and west, forming, as it were, the portals of our rock-bound bay.

She was no sooner discovered, than the fishermen, as usual upon such occasions, either clustered in knots beneath the shelter of the adjacent sheds and boats, discussing her rig, ton-

nage, and the danger that menaced her, or, leaning against the breast-work of the jetty, watched with their glasses the efforts she was making to escape from her perilous position. Here and there too, along the coast, groups of wreckers might be seen, peeping like cormorants from between the craggy cliffs, or standing upon the beach coveting with greedy eyes the costly prize.

It was evident by her trim, and the hitherto-apparent snugness of all on board, that she was manned by an experienced and gallant crew. But what could skill or courage do against the combined power of such a tempest and the force of the flood-tide, which was fast drifting her to leeward, now raising her upon the summit of the billows, and now plunging her into the yawning chasm beneath, until she seemed engulfed for awhile amidst the valley of waters? Every moment augmented the fury of the gale, and diminished her prospect of escape. Unless she weathered the northern point at the next tack, her only chance of safety was to bear up for the harbour, and trust to her anchors. It

is true, the wind might veer round two or three points, and enable her to gain the offing—a hopeless prospect. But apparently hopeless as it was, this chance was unexpectedly offered. After a momentary lull, during which the wind veered from point to point, as if uncertain in which quarter it would next exercise its fury, it shifted to the north, and blew with equal violence from the land.

The vessel, which had hitherto been struggling under close-reefed topsails and courses, no sooner felt the change than, putting up her helm and setting all the canvass she dared carry, stood out to sea. But this was a mere mockery—a delusion of the capricious elements; for scarcely had five minutes elapsed, ere the wind again shifted to its old quarter, and, taking her suddenly aback, with a heavy swell, carried away her foremast and main-topmast, before she could again pay-off and fill her sails.

An involuntary groan burst from the numerous spectators who crowded the jetty. She was now unable to weather the points on either tack, and destruction was inevitable. The very

shoal where she was destined to terminate her career was pointed out. Unless she struck upon the southern reef, she would probably come ashore at no great distance from the village. If so, there would be a chance of saving the crew. The prognostication was shortly realised. In a few minutes she was seen drifting with fearful swiftness towards the spot indicated by the fishermen; and, in less than half an hour, she was carried broadside-on upon a ledge of rocks, a short half mile from land. In a few minutes afterwards she was a perfect wreck—her masts, boats, and bulwarks gone, and the sea making a complete breach over her.

In the meanwhile, the people of our village had not been idle. The squire, in his quality of magistrate, galloped to the beach, accompanied by a party of gentlemen from the hall. The nearest troop of yeomanry was called out to protect such property or cargo as might be washed ashore. The apparatus for restoring suspended animation, with beds and refreshments, were prepared at the inn, and every other precaution

adopted to assist the sufferers that humanity or prudence could suggest. But the most active and important duty devolved upon my foster-father and his two elder sons, who, with three other gallant fellows, enjoyed the noble but perilous privilege of manning the life-boat. Without waiting for the usual thrilling summons, "A wreck! a wreck!" the pilot had no sooner cast his eye upon the Indiaman, than he felt that his forebodings of misfortune would be realised. He therefore assembled the boat's crew of which he was the steersman, and having made all right, tacked on the horses to the frame and conveyed her to the point most convenient for her destined service.

Scarcely, therefore, had the ill-fated vessel grounded, ere each man sprang to his place: the frame was backed to the water's edge, tilted, the signal given, and she was launched into the breakers amidst the exciting cheers of the by-standers.

How my young heart beat as I gazed upon those brave men speeding with cool but devoted eagerness upon their benevolent errand! How

my very soul sickened as I looked seaward to the stranded vessel, and saw a hundred living beings clinging with desperate energy to her remaining spars—the terrible seas curling fearfully, irresistibly over them, dashing some poor wretches to and fro like broken reeds, or sweeping others off, never to rise again! How my whole body trembled as I watched the progress of our little craft, dexterously, steadily cresting the mountainous waves, or disappearing, for a while, amidst the trough of foam—the grey hairs of the noble pilot floating in the wind as he stood bare-headed at the helm, his sinewy right hand firmly clenching the rudder-oar, his left waving encouragement to his own and the ship's crew, whilst his eagle eye watched the dangerous head seas, over which he appeared to stride upright and confident as the apostle.

At length, an upraised oar showed that the boat had neared the ship, many of whose crew in maddening haste quitted their hold, and sprang, towards her. Some sank, some rose to sink again, and some, more cool and strong, were saved: all she could hold, she took. Then

shooting towards the land, in a few minutes she was borne high and dry upon the beach. Three times the generous trip was made, and three times she returned full laden to the shore. The captain and a few officers, who had stuck, to the last, by the wreck, alone remained. Again the gallant craft was launched amidst the redoubled acclamations of the people, and the loud and hearty hurrahs of the squire and his friends. Again she safely reached the ship. All to the last man were now on board, and she was about to wend to shore, when suddenly a huge sea struck the vessel, and carrying with it the wreck of the mizen mast, which hung over its quarter, hurled it, end on, upon the devoted boat, with the force and speed of lightning. A thrill of horror ran through my heart as she went down, stove through and through by the huge fragment of wreck. Shortly, however, she again floated, and there was yet a hope—several poor fellows being observed clinging to her sides. But the sad forebodings of the last night had been too fatally realised—neither the pilot nor his sons were of the number. Their lifeless

bodies were shortly washed ashore, and brought to our desolate home. Too true, their lamp of life had burned away before the Christmas fare had passed our lips; and ere the morrow's sun had sunk beneath the western waters, old Giles's pick traced out a broad, new grave, close by the spot where James was laid. Henceforth no man dared doubt the sexton's warning, and few were bold enough to pass the church-wall after dark.

Never shall I forget the scene of misery which reigned that night in our once neat and cheerful home. There, upon the cold floor, amidst the scattered nets and furniture, were cast a heap of dripping clothes, encumbered with sand and masses of tangled sea-weed. There, upon the dresser, stood the huge yule pie untouched, unbaked. There, upon one bed, were laid the father and two sons—cold, stark, and bruised: their hardy hands and stiffened jaws clenched in eternal sleep. There, by the expiring embers of the fire we had not heart to feed, sat the poor widow, gazing with wild and vacant stare into the little chamber, where, by

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the dim light of one small candle, two old village crones performed the last sad offices to the drowned men. Poor woman! she wept not, spoke not, and when the gossips bid her "not take on so," and tried to comfort her, she did but raise her eyes to heaven and clasp her hands, and groan as though her heart would burst. There, at their mother's side, sat the two younger lads, wet, cold, and hungry—sobbing as children sob, with noisy grief, not knowing half their loss; and there sat I, shuddering and terrified at the grim reality of death, and weeping as bitterly, God knows, as if the stiffening clay had been my father's corpse. Wretched orphan! my desolate, my abandoned fate now burst upon me in all its nakedness, and when I turned and saw the pilot's wife cast her arms around her boys, and hug them to her bosom, and heard her say, "His will be done: I have nothing left on earth but thee!" the words struck deep into my heart—I envied them their mother's tenderness, and felt that I was now alone, without a hope or friend.

The two next days passed by in dismal si-

lence, interrupted only by our sobs, or the half-whispers of those who watched the dead, with here and there some kind and well-meaning gossip's consolation, which stirred our griefs but did not soothe them. Then came the joiner's men with three coffins, and the bodies were shrouded and placed in them. When this was done, and we were again alone, the widow crept softly to their side, as if she feared to wake them from their endless rest, and she hung over them in mute agony, and kissed the livid lips, which a few short hours before had beamed with life and smiles. Then she knelt down with her head reclining on her husband's coffin and beckoned to us, as we stood watching near the door, and we all knelt and prayed. How beautifully calm yet stern they looked, "each on his narrow pillow!" I was not frightened then, for I kissed, fervently kissed their clammy brows, and felt relieved that I had done so; and as I looked upon my foster-father's face, I thought he smiled; this lent me courage, and I grasped his stiffened hand, and rebuked the younger lads, for they shrunk back with terror.

Since then I have met death in various shapes. I have seen the young, the good, the innocent depart, cropped in the bloom of life, without a moan or sigh, as if to sleep. I have also witnessed horrid deaths, some on the scaffold, many on the field—deaths of remorse, devotion, recklessness, and crime. Some there were, and these were women, whose features gained by death: they looked so bland, so mild, so beautifully serene; but none surpassed in icy calmness the features of these three. It seemed as if they had gone down to death rejoicing in the sacrifice.

At length the time arrived for the last earthly parting: the joiner's people came again and screwed the coffins down, and covered them with plain black palls, and they gave us crape to tie about our hats, and dressed us in our Sunday clothes. The mourners, bearers, and those bidden to the funeral having assembled, wine and cakes were distributed; and the widow, attired in decent mourning, stood near the coffins, holding in each hand an orphan son. For in these humble walks of life, no wife, no

child, no parent, shrinks from the performance of those last sad duties, whence, from a heartless submission to the cold usages of society, the great withhold their presence. I followed, followed alone, for no one seemed to think of me, and yet I was not quite deserted. The pilot's dog, a noble beast of the Newfoundland breed, who, until then, had crouched beneath his master's bed, refusing food or comfort, crept towards me, and looking in my face, placed his paw upon me, and buried his nose in my bosom, and whined as if he felt for my loneliness. And I put my arm round his neck and pressed him to my side, and he whined again and wagged his tail: from that time he never quitted me.

The sad procession now moved forward, in all that grave simplicity which renders the poor man's funeral a thousand times more solemn and impressive than the gorgeous, heartless pageantry of the rich. First went the undertaker's men with staves and bands—then the three coffins borne by fishermen—then walked the widow and her children attended by a group of mourners, and last appeared the people from

the wreck, to save whose lives the dead had bartered theirs. All around was still and silent, save here and there a sob, or sigh, which struck upon the ear as we wound slowly onwards. At length we passed the little inn, kept by the father of poor William's sweetheart.

There the poor girl sat, or rather knelt, against the casement, weeping in all the agony of youthful grief—the blighting of that love to which all others are but as mere emotions—passions, which like air, rush to the vacuum of our hearts, to veil but not efface the past. So it was with her, most probably, for I have since traced her fate. It's an oft-told tale—she was the village queen, good, pure, and beautiful. The shock she had received brought on that fearful malady which too early and too often blights the fairest and the best. But, as she sank in strength and health, so she improved in grace and beauty. Many were her suitors, but she refused them all. At length her father died of apoplexy and left her friendless: so she yielded to the importunities of the young farmer who had long wooed her, and consented to their union. For a while

she revived with double lustre, but it was the last deceitful flicker of the expiring lamp: one afternoon she was found reclining upon the seat beneath the yew-tree which shaded William's grave: the passers-by thought that she slept—true, it was the sleep of death.

Upon reaching the end of the lane that opened upon the church, an event occurred which troubled the solemnity of the occasion, and showed that our misfortunes had not softened the rancour of the vicar's feelings towards us; for it could not be supposed that one who dealt so lightly with the duties of his sacred calling, should have been actuated by motives of conscience, or rather of bigotry. And yet how often does it occur that the worst despotism is cloked beneath the mask of exaggerated liberalism, and that the blindest intolerance is to be met with in those who are most notorious for the laxity of their moral conduct! The foremost coffin was now within the wicket of the churchyard, when the bearers paused, that the minister might advance as usual, and receive the bodies.

A solemn stillness reigned around. Each person bent his ear, and bared his head, expecting the commencement of that impressive sentence commanded by the ritual. But neither minister, nor clerk was there. This, however, might be accidental, for the former was not over-punctual in such matters. So on they moved towards the grave and laid the coffins down by it. Then collecting in a circle round, some turned their eyes towards the vicarage, and others, peering into the grave, gazed with reverential awe upon the rusty coffin handles and relics of decayed mortality which protruded from its crumbling sides.

Some minutes passed, and there we stood vainly waiting. At length the crowd became impatient, for the rain fell heavily, and a messenger was sent to fetch the clergyman; but still he came not. At last the clerk appeared and said, "Gentlemen, I'm very sorry, but the bodies can't be buried here."

"Why not?" exclaimed one of the mourners.

"Why, because the vicar bid me say he won't perform the burial service."

"And why not?" again demanded several voices, "It's a shame—it's against law!"

"Because they be dissenters and haven't paid the fees," was the reply. Many of the by-standers being of this persuasion, one of them, the village shoemaker, who was a preacher amongst the methodists, stood forward, and said, "What works are these? what is your law? are we to be cast out like devils? shall the dead bury their dead?"

"I don't think the vicar means that exactly," rejoined the clerk, simply, "but some one else must, for he says he won't—besides, you know, they never paid the rates, nor fees, nor came to vicar's church, and so they arn't no right to lay in our ground."

Murmurs and cries of "Shame, shame!" burst forth from all around, whilst some of the more headstrong cried out "Pitch him into the grave! pitch him in!—though he don't deserve to lay in christian ground no more nor his master."

Some of the fishermen seemed inclined to execute this threat, but the clerk saved them the trouble, for, as he was about to draw back, his

foot slipped and he rolled into the grave, at the bottom of which he lay, a piteous figure, covered with mud and earth. Despite of the gravity of the moment, many of the bystanders could not restrain their smiles, and some even cried out, "There's dust to dust for you."

The same person who spoke before, now stood forward, and raising up his hand to heaven whilst he looked sternly upon the half-buried clerk, apostrophised him thus—

"Fie upon thee, fie upon thee, and upon him that sent thee, thou son of Baal—are these the words of grace and charity thou cullest from the Gospel?—are we amongst the Pharisees? think'st thou there is no other road to salvation but through the tithe-man's gate? Have the outcast money-changers set up themselves in the church porch? Were they excommunicated? did they lay hands upon themselves, that ye deny them holy ground? Did they not throw down their precious lives for other men's redemption? Would'st thou, or he thou servest go and do likewise? Look, look, thou man of stone."

"I will, I will, if you will just give me a

hand to get out," replied the unfortunate clerk; "I cannot see a yard before me, down here."

"Look!" continued the other without heeding him, "look at these shipwrecked men, who now stand here to testify to the sacrifice. Where had these fifty been, had not our three departed brethren, through the mercy of the Lord, gone down to save them from the floods?"

"It wasn't my fault as they were drowned, nor the vicar's neither," interrupted the clerk. "In the name of mercy help me out—I be in such a muck!"

But the spirit had commenced to work too earnestly upon the shoemaker, so he continued, "You call him vicar—is he a fitting shepherd who forgetteth that we are all sheep of the same fold? Doth he not know that he who mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker, and he that is glad at calamities shall not rest unpunished."

"Then, if you be charitable men," exclaimed the clerk, "lift me out of the mire, and I will go to the vicar, and see what I can do for you."

"Let him refuse his ministry, or not," proceeded the other, "it matters not. These men have entered the kingdom of heaven justified rather than he. Yes," said he, raising up his eyes towards the lowering clouds, a movement mechanically followed by us all—"yes, I see them standing on the right hand of our blessed Redeemer, in the light of grace and heavenly fellowship, with Abraham and the angels. For, as the blood of them that shed man's blood shall by man's hand be shed, and they shall sink down into everlasting fire—so they that give their lives to ransom other life, shall be redeemed from death, and shall ascend, purified and blessed, and drink for ever the cup of life eternal."

There is no knowing how long the shoemaker would have continued, for his energy seemed to augment in proportion as he spoke, had not one of the other mourners interrupted him, saying, "Brother—speak not in the ears of a fool, for he will eschew the words of wisdom. Let us help him out of the mire, that he sink not, and let him go with us to him that sent him here: this

abomination must have an end—it's against all law, divine or human. If it is the fees he wants, let us bind ourselves to the child of mammon for the amount."

"I don't think that an action will lie in the ecclesiastical court," observed Mr. Steers, the ex-under-sheriff, who was amongst the spectators, "but, at all events, sue for a monition from the bishop; but I will take good care to send an account of the matter to an acquaintance of mine in London, who furnishes accidents for the morning papers, in the meanwhile I will accompany you to the vicar's, and demand an explanation."

This advice was followed, the clerk was raised from his unpleasant situation, and they proceeded on their errand attended by the crowd, who groaned and hissed, as they approached the vicarage. What further passed I know not, for I remained with the widow and her two children near the grave. But it seemed the vicar had consented to perform the duty, for he presently made his appearance in his surplice. As the rain poured down heavily, he placed himself

beneath the distant porch, and read the service in as hurried and careless a manner, as if he were reading for a wager.

When he had finished, he walked away, glowering with anger at us all. But no one heeded him—all eyes were turned with pity on the widow, who, when she heard the hollow echo of the stones and earth fall rattling on the coffins, gave one deep groan and fainted—and they bore her home and laid her on the bed, still imprinted with the forms of those she had lost. At length, abundant tears relieved her, and night closed on her bereavement.

CHAPTER III.

The widow thinks that charity should begin at home —I tumble out of the frying-pan into the fire—I appear before the overseer, who is determined to cure my monkey tricks—He administers justice to the parish paupers according to contract—A very Solomon—I am disposed of according to law.

So soon as the first burst of grief had subsided, the widow found it necessary to settle her affairs. Before the business of the rates, we had lived in comfort and comparative luxury; but nevertheless, our existence had always been from hand to mouth, for our means of subsistence were solely dependent upon the pilot's earnings, and the exertions of himself and sons, who, with one or two hired hands, were sufficient

to work the fishing lugger. On examining my foster-father's papers no will was found, nor any ready money, save a few pounds, which were insufficient to cover the funeral expenses and other small debts; and, as misfortunes never come alone, a notice was received on the day after the funeral that the sum borrowed to pay the costs of the burial must be repaid forthwith.

Only two alternatives remained. The one, for the widow to continue the fishing business with a hired crew until the remaining boys were old enough to undertake it themselves, and to endeavour to gain time for refunding the debt; the other, to sell the vessel and superfluous household furniture, to apprentice the lads to some trade, and to do as well as she could with the remnant of her property. The widow's two brothers, who had been called in to manage her affairs, agreed that the second alternative was the more prudent. The sale of the furniture and lugger was therefore determined upon, and I was bid to affix the ominous broom at the mast-head, a task I was nothing loath to perform. If I had before entertained

great repugnance to a seafaring-life, I now abhorred the very sight of a ship.

These matters took two or three days to decide upon, during which the widow, whose temper seemed completely soured by her misfortunes, treated me with much more unkindness than before her husband's death. She either took no notice of me, or peevishly repulsed my little services; and when she observed the tears chasing each other down my cheeks, and my heart choking with anguish, she bade me not stand blubbering there, but mind my work, and then, when I asked her if I might go to school after I had done, she merely answered, "Who's to pay for it?"

On the fourth or fifth day, the brothers, who bore a bad reputation along the coast, and had been more than once in gaol for smuggling and other offences, came again. "We've been thinking this here matter over, sister," said one of them, "and we are going to make you an offer, which we thinks will be more to your advantage than to sell the craft for half her value, mayhap."

"You've been kind brothers, though you have been a little wild," replied the widow, "and no doubt you'll do the best for me and mine."

"Yes," observed the other, "though we be likely to run great risks and lose by it, we don't mind that for the sake of you and the children."

"No, that we don't," continued the other brother: "so, if you've a mind to make the vessel over to Dick and I, and will 'prentice the lads to us, why, we'll bring 'em up to the trade, and take care on 'em, as thof they were our own; and as for the lawyer's debt and other matters, we'll settle that, so you sha'n't have no trouble."

"And how am I to live?" demanded the sister, instinctively.

"Oh, why, you shall have your share of the profits, and be a partner like," rejoined Richard, "and shall never want, if so be as we have any luck."

Although it was pretty evident that the two hypocrites wanted to get the lugger, a fast-sail-

ing craft, into their own hands, and although their characters were so notorious for cruelty and dissoluteness that even the overseers, who were not very tender-hearted, refused to bind any of the parish children to them, the widow, after a little consideration, took the offer as a great act of kindness, and the bargain was struck.

This being settled, one of them at length condescended to notice me, saying, "Well, and what are you going to do with that chap?"

"Why, that's what I was a-thinking of," replied Mrs. Penguin.

"I suppose you a'n't such a fool," observed the elder brother, "as to go on feeding and fondling another woman's son, when you haven't bread to give your own?"

"No," said the younger, "that's against all nature; for, though he be your husband's child, as I believes he to be, you a'n't his mother, and he a'n't no more call on you than that ere cur; why, I'd as soon kick one out as the other;" and by way of suiting the action to the word, he applied his foot to my friend Benbow's ribs, in a way perhaps that would have led to serious

retaliation, if I had not seized the dog by the tail, and soothed his anger.

" Yes, yes," added the other, " I'd turn him over to the workhouse, that's the place for him; and if the parish won't provide for him, I'll speak to squire's attorney, and he'll make 'em."

" Well," rejoined the widow, " I always had my misgivings, and often told my husband so; but it was of no use, so I let the matter rest; but, as you say, let who will be his mother, I'm not, and it a'n't for me to keep them that belongs to others."

" Well, then, I'll go down and speak to the overseer," replied Richard, " he sha'n't be a burden to you long."

My heart quailed within me at a verdict that condemned me to that miserable receptacle of profligacy, idleness, and sensuality, miscalled the workhouse; but I had little time for reflection; for the elder brother, who had taken possession of the barometer, a handsome box compass, a rich boatswain's whistle, a hanger, and one or two other articles of value, which were deposited in a little cupboard, called me to

him, saying, "Here, you Jack, heave a-head, you lubber, and take these here things, what poor Penguin gave me as a Christmas-box the night afore the wreck, and hand them over to my missis,—do you hear?"

I did hear, and heard a most confounded falsehood to boot. For it so happened that on Christmas Eve the pilot told his sons, in my presence, that these very articles were the gift of a captain with whom he had long sailed as boatswain, and that he would not part with them for love or money as long as he lived, and that when he died they should be divided amongst his children, except his silver whistle, and that was to be my property. Besides I knew that he could not abide his brothers-in-law—not because they might have run a few tubs of Hollands, but on account of their profligate conduct, which brought disgrace upon his family, and because they had often acted as crimps to the pressgangs, and had got many a poor fellow carried off to serve on board a man-of-war, leaving their wives and children destitute upon the parish. So I stood still, regard

ing him with all the contempt and hatred I could muster.

"Come," exclaimed he, scowling as if he, would have withered me with a look—"Come, I say, don't stand yawing there like the figure-head on a dutch schuyt—bear a hand, you son of a dirty drab."

The last words were no sooner out of his mouth, than forgetting his strength and size, I let drive at his stomach with all the force of which my puny arm was capable, and then darting at the hand he raised to strike me, I seized it between my teeth, and gave him a bite that made the water come into his eyes. However, he vigorously returned the compliment, and sent me reeling under the grate. Then taking a rope's end that lay on the floor, he belaboured me until I was as black and blue as the mottled cover of a copybook. But instead of crying or begging for mercy, I drew out the hot poker which protruded from the fire, just above my head, and swung it across his shins—an operation that sent him hopping and growling round the room like a bear learning to dance. Upon

this, up comes the other brother, and the brute, in his fury, kicked me in the ribs and on the temple, and stunned me: not, however, before I saw Benbow spring like an arrow over the table and fly at his throat.

When I recovered my senses I found myself lying upon a bundle of nets in the corner, my clothes covered with blood, my head bandaged up, poor Benbow quivering in the agonies of death, and the broken poker lying by his side It appeared, the generous beast, who had stood for awhile with bristles erect, eyes glowing, and mouth curled, showing his long fangs, no sooner saw his former aggressor fall upon me, than he bounded to the rescue, and would have avenged his own and my cause, had not the other brother seized the poker, and with too true an aim laid the poor brute at his feet. When I raised myself, all the consolation I got from the widow was, that I had met with my deserts, and that it was a pity her husband had not given me monkey's allowance, instead of encouraging me to mock and strike my betters —who, by-the-bye, if she meant her brothers,

were both gone, and the barometer and other articles with them. I have said that I never could love this woman as my mother—henceforth I hated her worse than I did the squire or the vicar, and made up my mind to run away and enlist as a drummer, sooner than stay with her. Even the workhouse seemed preferable to the fellowship of such hard hearts.

As soon as I was able to crawl out, I took poor Benbow in my arms and buried him in the garden, and was returning sorrowfully to bed for the last time, as I intended, under that roof, when we were surprised by a visit from the old lawyer and his two sisters, to whose kindness I had been indebted for buns and cider on Sundays.

"Well, Mrs. Penguin," said the former, "I'm sorry to find that you are going to give up your worthy husband's business: could not this have been managed otherwise?"

"Not conveniently, sir," answered the widow; "all poor James had died with him, and he has left nothing but these two poor boys and the lugger, which I've made over to my brothers,

and I'm to be partner with them like; they to pay all debts, and I share profits."

"Your brothers, eh! hem!" said Mr. Steers significantly.

"Yes, sir, though people do speak ill of them, they've always been good and true to me."

"Well, well, that's your look out; but what is to become of your boys?"

"I've 'prenticed them to their uncles, sir, and Jack there must go upon parish. I can't afford to keep other folks' children any longer."

"Dear me!" exclaimed one of the sisters, who now perceived me sitting in the dark corner, "poor lad! he is bruised and wounded —what ails you, child?"

"O ma'am," said I, bursting into tears at these the first words of kindness that I had heard since Christmas evening, "they told lies, and they killed the only friend I had, and I buried him in the garden."

"Killed!" exclaimed the two ladies; "what, committed murder?" and they both trembled from head to foot.

"Buried in the garden!" echoed their brother. "Jane, fetch the constables whilst I stay here to see no one escapes. Who have they killed? who are the murderers?" said he, seizing me by the collar.

"Dame Penguin's brothers," answered I.

"Hold your impudent tongue, Jack," exclaimed the widow, interrupting me; "it's nothing, miss, only Jack struck my brother with a poker, and Richard boxed his ears, and killed the dog for flying at him."

"As to the dog," replied the sister, "it does not so much matter, as he always worried my cat; but, dear me, I wish I had brought a bottle of my green oil, it is an infallible remedy for bruises. Poor child! why he is covered with blood."

"O miss, it's nothing only his nose," answered Mrs. Penguin.

"Do you call that nothing?" demanded the lawyer. "Egad, I shall look to this matter; I don't know but what the boy might recover heavy damages."

"O sir, he deserves it—he'll never turn to no

good," replied the widow. "It is he that got us into trouble with squire and vicar by playing such audacious pranks, and I wish the day had never been when my husband went and fetched him. I told James he'd get no good by fathering other women's unlawsome brats;" and then she began to cry bitterly.

"Come, come, my good dame," said the lawyer—"I think you are rather hard upon the poor boy. I never heard any ill of him; and as for a jibe or two at the squire and vicar's expense, there's no great harm in that; besides, your husband loved him as his own child."

"And more's the shame, sir, for folks say that James was his own father like," retorted the other, peevishly;—"but he's not my son—and you'd think it hard, miss, to be forced to be mother to what arn't your own, and that, miss, when we must sell one's little all to buy bread."

"Poor lad!" ejaculated Miss Steers, who had a compassionate heart, and had once been in love with a Captain of Militia, who died

through getting wet feet at a review; "I never shall forget his noble behaviour in throwing himself into the sea to save my Minna. If,"—and here she sighed, thinking, no doubt, of the captain—"If I were a mother, I should be proud to have such a brave boy."

"That may be, miss, but, as I said before, Jack must go upon parish; there's no law can force me to keep what arn't my own."

"O," said I, taking one of the ladies by the hand, "save me, miss, from the workhouse. It is not my fault that I am a poor orphan. I'll slave for you, work for you—I'll do anything sooner than go there." And here my sobs almost choked me.

"There, there, my good lad!" said the lawyer, soothingly—"do not be alarmed: we'll see what can be done. Pray," continued he, addressing Dame Penguin, "has the child no friends? know you anything about him?"

"No, sir, I neither know what he is nor whence he came. My husband did, of course; but although I often asked and taxed him with

being the father, and spoiling him, and putting him over the heads of his own children, he either bid me ask no questions or told me I was a fool for being jealous; 'and besides,' said he, 'if the boy be my son, it's my duty to provide for, and not desert him, as many great folk do with their children.'"

"But whence did your husband bring him? have you no clue to that?"

"None, sir."

"How did he come into your hands?"

"Why, it was about nine years past, this January," replied the widow, "that my husband got a letter by the post, and when he read it, he walked up and down the room, and wiped a tear from his eye, and muttered to himself, and then exclaimed, 'Poor fellow! that I will, so long as I have a crust myself;' and then he told me he was going a long journey, and should bring me back a present that I did not expect: and he wouldn't say more; but he got his best clothes ready, as if for a christening, and off he went by the Exeter coach, and in ten days came back and brought that child, who was then

about three years old. I won't say I was not jealous and cried, but he soothed me, and said it was an orphan left to his care, and that he had sworn to protect it as thof it were his own."

I listened to this feeble glimmering of my history with breathless eagerness, as she continued, " Well, I saw it was of no use to say a word, though I didn't believe him, and thinks to this day that it a'n't as it should be."

" Perhaps not, perhaps not," replied the lawyer; " but did he bring no clothes, no linen, —how was the child dressed?"

" As other middling folks' children are, sir; but what he had on was new, and clean."

" And what name did he go by?"

" Why, my husband said his name was Peregrine, but as that was outlandish-like, he called him Jack."

" Peregrine! that's by no means a common appellation."

" Brother," exclaimed old Miss Lucy, " had he no surname?"

" None, miss, that I know of, for he always

went by ours; and that confirmed me in the thought that he was James's own."

"Is that all you can tell me?" asked the lawyer.

"All, sir, except that once a twelvemonth, soon after new year, my husband went to doctor's, and took Jack with him, and I believe got some paper signed, and then he went away for a few days, as he said, to get his pension; but I could not learn where, except to Exeter, and I did not ask questions, and I'd no right to complain, for he always brought me home some little present."

"I hope no more such as he promised you the first time," observed the lawyer, smiling.

"No, sir, thank God; one was one too many of that kind."

"Did he appear to have more money than usual when he returned?" continued the other, contracting his brow and pursing up his mouth, signifying as if he had hit upon a luminous thought.

"No, sir, only his pension, which was a great help to us poor people."

"I see through the whole affair," observed the lawyer, "it is as clear as day—that child was not your husband's."

"May be, may be, sir," rejoined the widow; "but he would not have sent him to school, and done so much for him if he was not; but there are some people who take more to these here love-children, as they call them, than those of their own lawful wives,"—and she again fell to crying.

"O no, no; it's as plain as judgment by default. I know why he made these annual journeys,—yes, yes; and then, by-the-bye, though Penguin and all your family are dissenters, Peregrine was made to attend the parish church, was he not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Hem," said he, musing awhile. "Now, my good dame, it is near the time your husband made his annual journeys for his pension,—let me advise you to wait awhile, and not turn the poor child adrift. Take my word, you'll hear more about this business, and be rewarded for your pains; and, mind ye, tell your brothers to

be careful—a little more, and it would have been both boy and dog: a slice of bread or two cannot much hurt you, and may return upon you tenfold."

"O sir, a dozen loaves were nothing to us before my misfortune; but now I can't afford it at home, nor pay for his keep elsewhere. There's my own boys must starve if I do; and I'm their mother, and not his, and nobody can make me take care of what is another's."

"Well, well, my good woman, I don't pretend to force you: all I ask is a little patience and charity."

"Patience, sir! I've had to bear with it long enough already," replied the widow, who seemed to have set her heart on getting rid of me; "and as to charity, sir, that begins at home; if you will speak to my brothers, and if they'll consent to take him in—then, may be, it may be arranged—that is, if you and the ladies will pay for his keep."

This latter was an argument *ad hominem* that the worthy lawyer and his sisters were not prepared for, so he said, "Why you know, my

good dame, I am ready to give away as much as any one in charity ; but as for my supporting the child, that's quite out of the question."

" If your poor husband could look up from his grave," observed Miss Jane, " what would be his feelings, if you were to reject this orphan, whom he loved so much ?"

" Why, miss, as he is with God Almighty in heaven, he knows that I must sell my all to feed his own children ; but I can't indeed, sir. My brothers are gone to the governor's, and, unless the parish or some one else chooses to make an allowance, he must go to the workhouse."

My bruised body and throbbing head reminded me of what I was to expect from the widow's brothers, and I shuddered at the idea of being delivered into their hands. Of the two alternatives, even the hateful workhouse was the less terrible ; so I said, sobbing, " O sir, don't give me over to Bob and Richard, they'll kill me as they did poor Benbow. Take me with you, and put me in the workhouse, but don't let me go to them."

"Poor child," said Miss Jane; "it's a hard case, brother; let us see what can be done: you know he risked his own life to save poor Minna."

The other sister now addressed the widow, saying, "I'm not going to preach to you, Mrs. Penguin, but I'm sure that He who watches over the fatherless, will reward you if you are kind to this orphan; you will not repent sheltering the houseless or feeding the hungry; the scripture tells us that the mite of the widow is more acceptable in God's eyes than the rich man's gold,"—and then taking their leave, they told me to "keep up my spirits, be a good boy, and God would not desert me."

On the following day, the brothers again returned, and informed the widow that they had settled the matter with Mr. Stubbles the governor, and that I must go before him to get an order for admission. My fate was sealed. The workhouse was before me with all its degrading miseries; but that seemed preferable to remaining under the tyranny of the two smugglers. Having dressed me in the worst clothes they

could find, for they said it would be waste for me to wear good things, they marched me off to the house of the pauper potentate, a snug abode, which showed by its air of ease and abundance that, if he executed his duty in giving meat to the poor, he took good care to retain the marrow for himself. This individual was in fact the type of too many of those persons, who, from the negligence of parishioners or their own cunning, obtain the guardianship of the pauper population, and thus hold almost uncontrolled power over the sums collected for the gluttonous support of these lepers of society, who (in virtue of that system which has been justly designated as a premium to the independent labourer to become a pauper, and an inducement to the lazy pauper to renounce for ever his independence,) are permitted to fatten upon the industry and economy of the rate-payers.

It being parish day, we had to wait our turn in Stubbles' passage, who represented, it appeared, the whole parochial authorities, uniting in his own person the functions of workhouse

governor, overseer, churchwarden, collector of rates, tithe-man, and contractor for the poor, besides being baker, brewer, grocer, haberdasher, slop seller, and general dealer: in short, he was a kind of parochial pluralist, as multifarious in his avocations as Caleb Quotem, that is, in all but the matter of teaching little boys, though I soon found he had no objection to the whipping them. His principles in regard to diffusion of knowledge were worthy of his patrons the squire and vicar, for there was not a single child under his control that could read or write, an ignorance of which he expressed himself extremely proud, as he said it prevented the young vermin from scoring nastiness on the walls, and from wasting the parish candles in smoking their names upon the workhouse cieling.

As we stood at the entry, I watched with mixed feelings of fear and curiosity the scene that was passing, and the manner in which Stubbles listened to the complaints and meted out justice to the groups of claimants who came for relief. His face and figure, as well as his

proceedings, made a deep impression upon me. He was a short, bull-necked man, with a fat stomach, coarse bloated features, and a cluster of double chins that gave his head the appearance of one of those projecting turrets that hang over the ditches of ancient fortresses. His two grey eyes, twinkling with a rare expression of avarice and its twin sister selfishness, were shaded by a pair of large sandy-coloured brows, and these were again surmounted with a small, brown, scratch wig, the front part of which, or rather the bare skin beneath, he continually raked with one set of fingers, whilst he buried the other in the voluminous pocket of his plush waistcoat, as he issued his mandates to the applicants. He did not appear to trouble himself much with the accounts, for at his side sat an amanuensis, in the shape of his daughter, a fat, flippant, blousy girl, with a snub nose, thick lips, a greasy complexion, and a pair of glimmering eyes, like those of her parent. What her dress was I could not see, for it was concealed by a brown holland pinafore, which hung loosely over her person, augmenting the protu-

berant luxuriance of forms that nature seemed labouring to magnify from mole-hills into mountains. In the corner of the room was a sort of old-fashioned piano, or rather spinette, on which was a greasy music book, two or three still more unctuous novels, (as she had been "hedicated at an establishment for young ladies,") a tortoiseshell workbox, and some specimens of the skill of the French prisoners, in the shape of a bone guillotine and a box of dominoes. Over this hung a profile of her own face, like a black currant dumpling cut out of paper; and as a pendent, there was a sampler of marking-letters, and the Lord's prayer done in party-coloured threads. On the ink-stained table before this pride of the harem, was placed a large ledger, in which she kept the parish accounts and memoranda, in a scrawl that bore more resemblance to algebraical signs or hieroglyphics than to Latin text. I was examining these things when Mr. Stubbles exclaimed, "Silence out there; let them as wants relief step forward one arter another."

One of the first claimants who advanced, was a still-blooming peasant girl, not more than twenty years of age, with two fine children by her side, who came to ask relief in right of a third illegitimate infant, which she held in her arms; her air of boldness and indifference strongly contrasting with her handsome features and the noble outline of her person, which was remarkable for its symmetry, even in despite of the tattered and slatternly rags which dangled loosely upon her.

"What! you here again, Molly Garlock," said the overseer, "the old story, eh?"

"Yes, sir," replied the girl, "it's a misfortune."

"Why, you told me last time that you'd take care and not be unfortunate again; why, who's the father of this?"

"He a'n't got none, sir, more's the bad luck," answered Molly.

"Not got one! then you must find one," exclaimed Stubbles, "that's law."

"I knows it be, sir," rejoined the applicant, "and I did, and went, and swore against Tim

Pilchard afore the magistrate, but the press-gang came afore they made the warrant out, and carried him off, and they would not let me swear to another."

The wretched baby now began to screech most lustily.

" Hush, hush !" said the girl, uncovering her snowy neck, " there, there, I give you the best I can, and no mother can't do more."

" Why did you not fix upon some one who you could have made sure of ? this is always the way with you girls, and then you comes slap on the parish; that's law, I know, but—"

" Why, if I had fixed upon the right one,' said Molly with a cunning nod, " you'd not have been over pleased at it, Master Stubbles."

" What do you mean, you baggage ?" exclaimed the overseer; " I ——"

" No, not you, sure enough," replied the girl, eyeing the flabby porpoise before her with a sort of disdainful smile, " not you, but," added she in a whisper, " your son and you be all one, and he's the right one. There, miss," she continued, holding up the baby, " if it a'n't as like

Master Simon as two pins' heads, then my name a'n't Mary Garlock: ask any of them that sees it."

"Come, wench," said the overseer, not over desirous of a reference, "you need not make such a rumpus—I'm ready to do all I can for you."

"You must," said the girl doggedly. "I knows the law; and if I don't get a good allowance, I'll let all the world know the whole truth."

"Then they'll indict you for perjury, and send you to gaol—that's law."

"No they won't," retorted she, "for what use would that do them? they must keep us there as well as here, and they live better down at jail that we do that has our liberty; there's many poor folks that wish they were in jail this hard winter-time."

"Well, put down half-a-crown," said the overseer, "that's liberal."

"I won't take less than three-and-sixpence," retorted the other.

"The devil's in the wench," exclaimed Stub-

bles; "but parish pays, so you must have it, I suppose, but only take my advice, Molly, and get a husband;—why, with three children and nine shillings a week allowance, you'd be a fortune to many an honest man—and that's law."

"Mayhap I may, sir, now as I can do it comfortably," replied she, as she joined a strapping-looking peasant lad outside, who had been watching the whole proceedings with great anxiety. And she was true to her word. In less than three weeks, she was made an honest woman, and the proprietor of an income of twenty-three pounds a-year, levied upon the parish as the reward of her immorality and her husband's own base speculation.

Another group now presented themselves. This consisted of three or four old women, who advanced curtseying, mumbling, and nudging each other forward, doubtful which should act as orator.

"What the deuce do you want, Martha Rickets?" said Mr. Stubbles, addressing the foremost crone; "you're always grumbling."

"Only when I has my reasons and a'n't my

rights," retorted Martha; "I be come to say, that we a'n't properly treated down at work'us."

"Not properly treated!" ejaculated the overseer; "why, don't you get the best of everything?"

"No, sir, that's what we has to complain on."

"No! haven't you four good meals a day? haven't you good fires, the best wallsend, and good beds, feather-beds, all for nothing and no work?—and a'n't you better off than many what labours for their bread?"

"Why, God be praised for all his mercies," answered the dame, "we be putty comfortable in our old age, and a'n't much to do for it, only we wishes to have a little sugar with our tea like. It's hard upon such poor, worn-out creturs, what's been in work'us for twenty years, to be obliged to drink our tea without sugar; and the tea a'n't as good as it was afore the war—it's all birch-dust like; and then," continued she with increased volubility, "there's the bread a'n't of the very best wheat, you know. Says I to Janet Biggs, the night afore new year, Dame Biggs, says I ——"

"You did," exclaimed old mother Janet, "I'll take my bible oath on it."

"Says I, Dame Biggs, this here bread's two days old, and it's quite a martyrship for us poor old bodies, which a'n't got no teeth left, to be obligated to eat stale bread."

"I broke my best double tooth on it, as God's my witness," said a third crone, opening wide her shrivelled jaws and showing the dark havoc that time had inflicted upon her mandibles.

"And then," proceeded Martha, "the beer a'n't good and strong, it's quite small, swipes like, and a'n't wholesome for us poor old bodies; it's quite gripsome like;"—here she dipped her finger into the horn box of Mrs. Biggs, and, having taken a stimulating pinch, and smoothed down her apron, continued,—"and if so be as we might be so bold, we should like a crumb of backy like, we poor destitute creturs wants a little comfort for our poor souls: and then, sir, there's them two gurls, what acts as servants according to contract, them's always a courting with the lads, and never puts the

kettle on for our tea, and never makes our beds comfortable."

"Why, Martha Rickets!" exclaimed Stubbles, out of all patience at this catalogue of grievances, "why, them be all luxuries that's only fit for lords and members of parliament. Why, I brews the beer myself, and there a'n't better malt nor hops in all Devon, and that's contract and law."

"May be, sir," retorted Martha; "but it don't gripe us never the less for all that."

"Nor us neither," said a sleek, overfed, peasant lad, who now poked himself forward; "it's like varjice; and zur, I've got a complaint, and I be zpokesman for these here poor men," pointing to three or four lazy, chubby yokels who stood close at his heels.

"Well, and, what be it?" demanded Stubbles; "you can't complain o' starving; why, you be so full you can't hardly breathe, and a'n't done a spit of work these six months."

"That a'n't neither here nor there," replied the peasant. "According to contract, parish be bound to furnish we poor creturs with good

roast beef, and good plum-pudding on Christmas-day, and all I a got to say is, that the beef warn't good, but bull beef as lean and tough as ould Giles Sexton's body, without never a mossil of fat on it; and there warn't no plums in the pudding, only a few currants like. And the chiz we gets be full o' great walloping maggits as you might bait a fish-hook with; and since I've been in work'us, we ar'n't had no fish, nor green peas, and poor ould father's wig be worn out, and he must have a new un—that's contract."

"Why, you'll not be content until parish furnishes you with new hands and bodies too, I take it," said Stubbles, interrupting him; "you'd grumble though squire giv'd you a buck and a barrel of strong beer every day: you've the best articles my shop affords, and there's no better in all Devon."

"Yes, papar," exclaimed Miss Stubbles, "and you quite lose by your fillantrepics,—I can prove it by ledger. They'll expect soon to lay down on their backs, and have their mouths

crammed with saucingers, just as the king and queen of the Skimmaus does."

"You're right, Sally," rejoined the father; "they're a set of the ungratefullest fellows I ever heard on. There's many an honest man that works hard for his livelihood that would be glad to get the vittels that they turn up their noses at. They may think 'emselves lucky as they've got a hoverseer what has the interest of the poor at heart—and that's law."

"Well, well," returned the peasant; "all we wants be our rights, and what we be 'titled to according to contract; and if we can't get it, we'll appeal to zessions, as Thomas said. We knows how the land lies—and that's flat."

Stubbles, who had little inclination to have his proceedings investigated by the bench, now softened down, saying, "I never want to refuse no poor man his just rights—and that's law. I'll see what's to be done to make you comfortable; but I will say this, that there ar'n't a parish in all England where the poor lives on the fat of the land as you do—and that's my verdict."

It was now our turn to be examined, and so I was pushed forward with an encouraging poke in the back from the knee of the widow's elder brother, and placed opposite Mr. Stubbles, who forthwith exclaimed, "What! that's the chap, is it? I know the young dog: we'll cure his monkey tricks."

"Yes, your honour," answered Richard, who acted as interpreter to his sister, "we wants to get rid on him: sister can't afford to keep other folks' children, and so he must go to work'us."

Stubbles, who never for a moment lost sight of his own interest, observed, "You're right, it's law, and there arn't no gainsaying that. But don't you think, Dick, that if I were to make you an allowance o' money you might keep him, and you could take it out in slops or what not, at my shop?"

"Thank ye, thank ye, sir," replied the other, who was quite as deep as Mr. Stubbles. "Sister says she won't have anything to do with him; and we have scarce room in our cottage for the other boys, what she has 'prenticed to me."

"The devil she has!" exclaimed the overseer, who seemed surprised at the widow's placing her sons in such hands. "Well, you must do as you like. The lad's got a settlement, and so we can't refuse to take him in. I only spoke for your good." And then he added in a half whisper, "You might keep him as short and thrash him as long as you pleased, and have the value of the allowance in the best of everything, and neither of us be none the worse."

The smuggler seemed to be wavering, and turned to his sister, but she had evidently resolved to get rid of me at any rate, for she immediately answered, "Much obliged to you, sir, all the same, but I have made up my mind, and there's an end on it. I won't keep him a day longer. I have had trouble enough already with his doings, and will stick by the law."

I stood by, mute but resigned; for I had also made up my mind to escape the first opportunity; besides, the account I had heard of plum-pudding and other dainties had consider-

ably diminished my horror of the workhouse: whilst Mr. Stubbles' benevolent proposition to thrash me *ad libitum* had augmented my dread of remaining with the widow.

"Well, dame," said the overseer, after a pause, "there's no gainsaying law. Sally, make out the order to the assistant: and, Richard, you go down and take him, and tell 'em to set him to work. There be plenty of his feather to keep him company."

This being settled, the widow took her departure, scarcely looking at me, and her brother, putting on his hat, and whispering to Stubbles about a fair wind, dark night, tobacco and Hollands, pushed me before him as he would a calf to the slaughter-house.

CHAPTER IV.

Monkey's allowance—Murder most foul and dread—Misfortune brings one acquainted with strange bedfellows—One good turn deserves another—I saved a cat, the cat saves me—A change comes o'er the spirit of my dream.

We were not long before we reached my destined home—a great red brick building, distinguished from every other in the parish by its solitary situation in an obscure lane; the surrounding fences trodden down; its walls dingy and creviced; its doors paintless and notched; its broken panes stuffed with rags or replaced with paper; three or four pigs grubbing in what was intended for a garden; and its

whole exterior presenting an air of desolateness and disorder essentially typical of the slothful life of its degraded tenants.

After a short dialogue between Richard and the assistant, I was duly made over to the latter, who, taking me by the shoulder and poking me through a dark passage into the back yard, placed a bundle of flax and a bat in my hand, and bade me set to work with several other tattered boys, who were occupied under a shed. Though my heart was almost bursting with emotion, I managed to gulp down my tears, and obeyed. But no sooner had the Cerberus turned his back and locked the door, than my companions threw down their work, and gathering round me, demanded their footing, which they succeeded in obtaining, because I lost mine in the scuffle, and with it my only treasure—a few halfpence. They then set to play at pitch and hustle with the copper they had wrenched from me, swearing and blaspheming after a horrid manner, as they accused each other of cheating, or as they fought to prove their innocence, telling me the while, that if I 'peached,

they would serve it out to me properly. At length, it being nearly dark, a bell rang, the door was unlocked, and we were allowed to enter the common room, where the inmates of all sexes were assembled near the fire, awaiting their evening meal.

Accustomed as I had been to the neatness and decency of the pilot's abode, I looked with disgust upon the scene before me, and although I was not over nice, the foul odour of tobacco and the unwholesomeness of the air almost stifled me. The walls and ceilings, denuded of colour and plaister, were smeared with smoke and stains. Upon a large deal table, notched and greasy, stood an iron candlestick, in which a flaring rushlight streamed away in yellow gutters. By its flickering light two of the morning's complainants were playing at cards, whilst the assistant overseer sat close by, with his arm round the waist of a buxom wench, who leaned on her two elbows, watching the game. A broken cuckoo clock, which, by a singular coincidence, always pointed to meal times, occupied one corner, and at the end of the chamber

was a large open stove, fenced round by four or five unwashed benches and rickety settles whilst the brick floor was strewed with nut-shells, potatoe-peelings, and fragments of bones, from which a poaching-looking lurcher was extracting a supper.

Upon one side sat five or six decrepit old paupers, who had lived upon the parish bounty for a quarter of a century. Some blind or blear-eyed, some deaf, all tormented with asthmatic and weezing coughs. There they squatted, motionless and melancholy, as if they had been moulded of burned clay; one or two warming their shrivelled, bony hands, as lost in vacancy they watched the crumbling embers; others muttering and mumbling, between the intervals of their cough, about hard times and worse "wittels," regardless of another old creature, who, with his nose pinched by a pair of dim spectacles and his trembling finger pointing to the words of a book, as if to guide his failing sight, was ejaculating aloud the contents of a tract—the only approach, by-the-bye, to religion which I heard in that place. Oppo-

site to these was Dame Rickets and her aged companions, making an effort to darn worsted stockings, and recounting their morning's prowess at the overseer's to some younger females, who were nursing their infants. Intermingled with the latter were several able-bodied labourers, who were regaling them with coarse jokes, or narrating their adventures in the encounters they had had with the squire's keepers or the revenue officers, in their poaching or smuggling expeditions.

I had not tasted food since daybreak, and however much people may talk of great grief being mute, I found that mine was by no means inclined to silence; for my stomach not only began to call out lustily for food, but to prick up its ears in despite of the proverb. Nor was I singular in this yearning, for scarcely had the clock struck the hour of meal time, ere the paupers began to grumble in chorus at their supper not being forthcoming, and the bloated, sturdy fellow who had enacted spokesman at the overseer's exclaimed, "Dang me if I don't appeal to zessions. They keeps us out of our

dues as long as they can, and when they does come they bean't fit for christians."

"You be right, Jem," echoed another athletic labourer with a detestable expression of countenance, who went by the name of Tinker Sam, "you be right, lad. Look'y here. I knows what our dues be as well as ony parliament mon. There was a jemman from Lunnun, what I met up at Taanton 'lection, what zaid he came to zpeak the truth and open the people's eyes for the good of the conztituzion like, and he zaid as how he knew the roights of mon, and as we was every brass nail as good as our masters, only they was rich and we was poor, and all the big folk wanted was, to vamp themselves up and zodder us down like. But as we was strongest and honestest we ought to act laws for them, and not they for we;—and that the lords and squires and parzins was the enemiz of the poor, and hammered 'em to dust wi' rents and rates; and that God's creturz was all one afore the law, and hadn't no bizness to slave and work 'emselves to cinders for rich folk to spend the money up in Lunnun wi' doxies

and what not. He zaid as them as they call the House of Peers, was a parzel of idle fellers, what zits with gold crowns on their yeads, made from the zweat of the people, each on 'em big enough to keep a poor family in wittels for fifty yearn, and never does a ztroke a work for it; and whilst they lives on the fat of the land and spends the taxes in card-playing and hoss-racing and nazional debt."

"I knows what card-playing and hoss-racing be roight well," observed the other, "but what koind of a game be nazional debt?"

"Why, you clout-headed snob," replied the tinker, "you doan't know no more of pollitricks nor an ould tin zacepan. Why it be the money what parli'ment zays the poor folk owes them, to keep their coaches, and to pay the sodgers and pressgangs. Well!" continued he, "and so the jemman treated us to as much lush as ever we could ztow away, and zaid, 'Now, my lads, I'd unoite and meet together, and if the squires and farmers won't down wi' rents and up wi' wages, why I'd ztrike and go upon parish, and then they'd see how their corn would grow.' D——

'em," added the tinker, smiting the table with his brawny fist, "the jemman was right; the lords and squires thinks they've done their duty when they gives us a few zcraps of coarse meat, what arn't enough to keep body and zoul together, and claps us to rot in a hole, what arn't fit to kennel their dogs in. But we'll have a flare-up some of these here nights."

"I don't think so be as you have any cause to grumble o' that score, Sam Scraggs," exclaimed Dame Rickets; "nor as you knows much about lords and ladies and such like. Do he, Janet Biggs?"

"No, that he don't, Mrs. Rickets, I'll take my bible oath on it," answered the old woman.

"No! but I does. Now, I'll tell you what. I was nurse, as all the parish knows, to my lord's only son up at castle, what was drowned, dear gentleman, in trying to save a poor sailor's life,—God reward him for it! and better and kinder folk never breathed, nor more bountiful to we poor bodies: and if my lord hadn't agone and died of a broken heart, and the property

a gotten into other hands, I think they said a lawyer man got it, when they cut off the 'tail, why I shouldn't never have wanted for nothing. But God's will be done. The workus arn't so bad, ater all, and I've been here, let me see——"

"Five-and-twenty years come next Candlemas," observed Dame Biggs; "I'll take my bible-oath on it, and that's the time my husband was transported for shooting a hare."

"Yes, five-and-twenty years, and I arn't cotched cold more nor once, and that were a washing up at Farmer Brown's; but howsomever, I will say this here, it is a burning shame as they won't allow us poor bodies a little candy for our tea; and what I says more is, that it's a worser shame, Sam Tinker, that you great lazy fellows, what ought to arn your living, don't go to work. That's what makes the big folk so hard upon we poor bodies."

"D—— your bodies and the work too," replied the tinker. "It's you that ought to be in your coffins, and not take up the room o' your betters. If I were judge at 'zizes, I'd hang every ould woman in the parish."

"You'd better not talk a hanging, Sam Scraggs," retorted the dame; "you'd look awesome queer if you seed the judge rise afore you with his black cap, and know'd you desarved it."

"Thee had'st better clap a stopper on thy ould pot-handle," returned the other, "and let me alone." Then turning to the man whom he addressed before, he continued, "Now I'll tell you something else what I heard when I was doing a job in my line down at Plymouth dock."

"Yes," croaked out Dame Rickets, irritated at the contempt with which Scraggs treated her, "and a pretty job you made on it. We knows, Sam, what happened; you could na keep your fingers out of the landlord's till, and a nice snug lodging they give'd you down in county Bridewell."

"Haud thy croaking jaw, dame," retorted Scraggs, "or I'll give thee zummut will make thee."

"I won't, I won't," continued the old woman, raising her voice, "if you cotched your desarts,

you'd be in Botamy Bay amongst the niggers, or some'ut worse."

"I tell thee, dame, if thou giv'st me any more of thy zaace, I'll make no more bones o' cracking thy ould gullet than I would this here," answered the tinker fiercely, as he snapped his short pipe asunder and threw the fragments in her face.

"Ah! ah!" replied the old dame, nothing daunted. "You were a talking a dues, warn't you? You'll never get your dues, lad, until you stand afore the judgment-seat with a hempen 'kercher round thy wizzen. You're born to die standing."

"Hould thy tongue, I tell thee again," bellowed forth the other, knitting his brows and frowning terribly at her; "hould thy tongue, or I'll clammer up thy jaws with my fist."

"May-be, may-be," replied Mrs. Rickets, her aged eyes sparkling with fire and her shrivelled finger pointing to the tinker;—"and not the first time that ere unlawsome hand has done a deed of darkness. There's blood on it now—eh! eh!"

"Hell and damnation!" exclaimed Sam, stamping on the floor with a force that shivered the very bricks. "Thee bee'st a devil in she-clothing."

"It's hell you talk on!" retorted the dame. "You're right, lad. The fires be a burning in thy noisome heart now. It's the devil you think on, eh? why you're all his own, body and soul, as sure as there be justice in God's ways. Who was it?" continued she, raising her voice to a pitch of extreme excitement, "who was it, I says, that helped Suky Barnes' baby into Sedgewick pond wi' two dark spots on its neck? who turned king's evidence to skreen hisself? whose blacksome tongue bore false witness against the poor cretur of a mother, and zwore away her life at 'zizes? and who sold her clothes and got drunk with the money, as the drop fell and the hangman was a pulling at her legs for mercy? mother and child!—out upon you! out upon you!"

The features of the tinker, during this time, were convulsed with rage, he became livid with fury. His knees smote each other, his nostrils

expanded, and his eyes gleamed with deadly revenge. At length, as the old woman uttered the last words, he yelled forth a fearful oath, and, with a bound like that of a lion, sprang forward, seized her by the neck, shook her as a mastiff would have done a cat, and dashed her from him against the wall. Then, ere any one could move to seize him, he jumped over the table, felled to the ground the assistant overseer, who attempted to interfere, wrenched open the door, and, favoured by the darkness of the night, darted into the fields.

Whilst some of the most active paupers raised a vain hue and cry after the fugitive, of whose strength and brutality they all stood in awe, the remainder gathered about the poor old dame. But she was past help. Her neck was dislocated and her skull fractured. Her body was conveyed into the washhouse, the usual receptacle for the pauper dead, and placed in in one of the shells kept in readiness by contract. On the following day a coroner's inquest brought in a verdict of wilful murder against Scraggs, who had succeeded in eluding his pursuers.

Although Martha Ricket's prophecy was not rigidly fulfilled, and although the triple murderer, for such it seems he was, escaped the vengeance of human justice, that of Heaven fell upon him in a manner suited to his enormities. A fortnight after this, the squire and vicar were beating for woodcocks, in a sequestered part of the covers, when they were attracted by the furious barking of their spaniels, to the side of a deep pit overspread with brambles. As the animals continued to yelp and howl around the spot in a manner unusual when springing game, the keepers pushed aside the bushes, and discovered the dead body of a man, which was instantly recognised to be that of the tinker. Upon dragging forth the corpse it presented a ghastly spectacle. One leg was dreadfully shattered, and the other torn and lacerated with slugs. The jaws were wide open and distorted with agony. The eyes, and flesh of the face and neck, had been devoured by the ravens and other carrion birds, many of which were seen cawing and chattering upon the adjacent trees, or swooping over head, indignant at being

disturbed from a repast which they disputed with the foxes and wild vermin. And they had feasted apparently ere life was yet extinct, for one of these creatures was found crushed in the convulsive grasp of the dead man's hand, as it lay clenched upon his throat.

On examining the ground around, it appeared that the wretch had dragged himself a considerable distance to the pit, where it seems he had fallen. Clots of blood, and shreds of clothes, were traced for nearly two hundred yards towards a more open space, where it seems he had trodden upon the wire of a spring gun, the contents of which had struck his extremities, and, from the direction he had taken, it was evident he had sought to reach the skirts of the wood, to deliver himself up perhaps, rather than die a lingering death of agony and starvation. This was probably a solitary instance of the weapons by which the tinker met his fate having been instrumental to the ends of justice. Hitherto some wandering child or negligent keeper had been their only victims. It was also a proof of the fickleness of public opinion

upon these matters, for if heretofore the squire had been abused for employing such devices in his plantations, he was now looked upon as an instrument in the hands of Providence, and lauded for his caution.

Although the horrible scene that had taken place retarded the paupers' supper, it by no means diminished their appetites; and when the smoking messes of hot porridge, and fine wheaten bread, cheese, butter, and beer, (as good, or better, than anything I had tasted in our cottage,) was set before them, they ate in a manner that plainly showed the injustice of their morning's complaint. To be sure, there was here and there a maggot or two in their cheese; but, if they had known that the lords and squires against whom they railed, were not content with a Stilton, until it was in a state of locomotion, they would perhaps have been satisfied. Having glutted themselves with this their fourth repast, grumbled that they could not devour more, and yawned until one could see into their throats, they crawled one by one

to bed, some smoking, and others swearing, by way of grace. The order of the workhouse was that the females should occupy one wing, the males the other, but this regulation was little attended to, nor was the slightest care taken of the children; and, as my bed was occupied, I should have been compelled to sleep on the floor, had not a bed-ridden old woman offered me a share of her pallet. But tired as I was, I could not close my eyes, for whenever I was sinking into a doze, the convulsive kicks caused by my aged bed-fellow's asthmatic cough instantly roused me, or else she tweaked my nose and made me rise to fetch her a drop of comfort in the shape of peppermint-water. But even if this had not been the case, sleep was impossible, from the snoring of some, the rheumatic groans of others, and the giggling and hubbub that was kept up by the rest, who seemed mingled together in a way that would have gladdened the heart of Father Enfantin and his St. Simonian proselytes. Glad was I when day dawned and I was enabled to descend into the

fresh air, more disgusted than ever, and more determined to escape as soon as possible, from this den of misery, vice, and gluttony.

But where to go or what to do without a penny? This puzzled me completely. For although I heard there was a recruiting party down at Plymouth, I feared being taken up as a vagrant before I reached that place, or falling into the clutches of the pressgangs when I did. Besides, I was told by an old pauper soldier, that, although the crimps were not particular about the men they inveigled into the service, providing they were sound-limbed, the officers would not enlist a boy like me, notwithstanding I could play on the fiddle nearly as well as the band-master of his old regiment. I therefore lingered on from day to day, with the intent but not the courage to fly—a constant witness of scenes less fatal, but not less degrading or immoral, than that of my first night's initiation. At length the very day that I had made up my mind to elope at dusk, and had laid by some scraps of bread and meat, to serve me by the

way, my projects terminated in a manner for which I was totally unprepared.

A short time after breakfast, when I and the other boys were turned into the back yard, to beat hemp, the assistant overseer poked in his head, and addressing me, exclaimed, "I say, you Jack Penguin, go down to Lawyer Steers', you be wanted: and see you don't stay long. I won't have no idling. The work the whole pack on you does ain't worth the skip of a lame ———."

Wondering what Mr. Steers could want with me, I lost no time in obeying his summons, though I was heartily ashamed to traverse the village in the filthy plight in which I was. At length I reached the worthy lawyer's house, which, as usual with gentlemen of his profession in the country, might be distinguished from almost any other in the place by its air of neatness and cheerful opulence.

For a while I stood at the low garden wicket, now gazing upon the clusters of snow-drops, and other winter flowers that already shot forth their buds in the neat trimmed borders, and now admir-

ing, first the red blossoms of the pyrus, trained against the wall, and then the rows of brilliant bulbs within the windows. At length, with a beating heart, I crept up to the door and lifted the knocker, frowning in the form of a lion's head over the bright brass plate, on which was inscribed, "Steers, Solicitor and Land Agent."

A tidy, healthy maid, ruddy and fragrant as an Ashmead pippin, soon admitted me, and I was ushered into the parlour, where I found the good old ladies preparing a bottle of their celebrated green oil for a poor patient, whilst their brother was basking before the fire, in that classical British attitude, which proves that, however warm and generous English hearts may be, there must be a singular indisposition on the reverse side to engender caloric. "Well, Jack, alias Peregrine!" exclaimed Mr. Steers, as I stood with my body half in and half out of the door. "By-the-bye, it's winter—shut the door."

"And wipe your feet first on the mat, my dear," ejaculated Miss Jane. "Ah, those workhouses are sad places of corruption!"

When I had done as I was bid, Mr. Steer's

continued, "Well, Peregrine,—thought I'd forgotten you, eh? not so bad as that—no, no!" said he, advancing, and withdrawing his hands from beneath the shelter of his coat-skirts, and patting me on the head—"I smelt a rat—told Dame Penguin she'd sink the ship for a penny-worth of tar—haven't been in business forty years for nothing—may say, that no client ever repented taking my advice, though many have who neglected it. Eh, sisters?"

"Your reputation, brother," replied the younger lady, "stands as high, I believe, as that of any solicitor on the rolls—but, dear me," added she, putting on her spectacles to watch her cat, who came purring and rubbing itself against my legs—"dear me, if the instinct of the poor creature is not wonderful, she has recognised her deliverer; and yet they say cats have no personal attachments."

„O my!" echoed the other sister; "see, she has jumped upon the table to be still nearer to him, and has put her face upon his heart: it's really marvellous." Minna's caresses were, however, not quite so disinterested as the good ladies

supposed; for, after mewing and twisting about her tail, and fidgeting for a few seconds with her claws upon my torn jacket, she poked her paw into my pocket, and whipping out a piece of the meat I had stowed away to serve on my journey, she sprang off like an arrow with her prize.

"Cupboard love, cupboard love, after all," exclaimed Mr. Steers, laughing; "but it's the way of the world: men and monkeys, women and cats—all put their paws into our pockets if they can. Ah! we're all poor weak creatures—all impelled by the same selfish sentiments. But how is this, Peregrine?—how came you to turn cats'-meat man? you seem to have forgotten the saying, of eat as much as you please, but do not pocket."

"Oh, I see," said the kind, single-hearted sister, "the poor boy thought of his friend Minna, and robbed himself of his supper to bring her a morsel: I always said that he was a good, generous child."

"No, ma'am," replied I, blushing, "I will not tell stories. The truth is, I could not bear the horrid workhouse, and had determined to run

away this very day; and look, ma'am," said I, pulling out of my pocket the remaining store, intermingled with bits of oakum and crumbs, "I stowed this away to help me on my road to Plymouth, where I intended to enlist as a drummer."

"Well, my boy," rejoined the lawyer, "I admire your spirit; you could not do better than serve your country; but I fear I must put an end to your martial projects. Hark ye. After the conversation I had with Dame Penguin, I and sisters thought there must be more in this business than met the eye, and that you must belong to some one. We therefore determined, if possible, to sift the matter to the bottom. So I wrote an account of the case to my nephew and correspondent, Eliab, who, by-the-bye, owes his success in life to the lessons he received in my office, and begged him to insert an advertisement in the papers."

Mr. Steers then put on his spectacles, and read the following lines:—

"LOSS OF LIFE-BOAT, AND DESERTED CHILD.

"James Penguin, of ———, in the county of

Devon, pilot, having perished with his two sons on Christmas-day last by the swamping of the lifeboat, after rescuing fifty-three persons from the wreck of the Calcutta, East Indiaman, the child entrusted to his care is left destitute on the parish. Should this meet the eye of any person or persons interested in the poor boy's fate, they may ascertain further particulars on application to Mr. Eliab Steers, No. 15, Gray's Inn, or to Mr. Francis Steers, solicitor and land agent, ———, Devon."

"Well," continued he, "as I before observed, I don't think I ever mistook the right side of a cause in my life; and although I say it that should not, I've put more money in one term into Squire Oxover's pocket, than he will get in twenty years by his new friend the under-sheriff."

"You may indeed say that," observed his sister; "where would have been his borough and the Oxover estates, had you not disputed the bill of ejectment?"

"Ay, ay," replied Mr. Steers, "how did I get him out of that? A verdict in three months

from the chancellor after fifteen years' deliberation. Coke and Littleton, backed by the twelve judges, could not have done more. My plan is to help people out of chancery, and not to leave them to plead and replead, until the court swallows up all the meat, and leaves them nothing but the bones."

"And that's the reason you do not keep your coach, brother, as many others do," observed Miss Steers, with a sigh. "Why, I declare, Mr. Cramping has set up a two-horse chaise already, and his daughter went to the assizes in it."

"Honesty is the best policy after all, I believe, sisters, and you need not envy them. However, so long as I can keep you and your cat, you have no reason to complain. But Peregrine is getting impatient,—where was I, eh?"

"Why, sir," replied I, "at Mr. Francis Steers, solicitor and land agent, ——, Devon;" and in truth I thought he never would get any farther.

"Well, then, my boy," replied he, "I this morning received a letter from Eliab, containing the following communication:—

"'London, 12th Jan. 180—

"'Sir,—The advertisement relating to the deserted child, inserted in the daily papers, has met the eyes of the parties concerned. You are therefore to take immediate steps to rescue from his present unhappy situation the boy, whom it is presumed is Peregrine, alias Jack Penguin, and afford him such assistance as he may stand in need of. You will, further, be pleased to see, firstly, that the boy be decently and properly attired, as becomes the son of respectable persons in middling life; secondly, that he be furnished with linen and other sundries, as per inventory enclosed: and thirdly, when he shall be so equipped, that he shall be delivered, without loss of time, to the care of the guard of the Regulator, Plymouth and London coach, with directions for him to be left, till called for, at the Green Dragon at Salisbury, where he will be further disposed of. Herewith you will find enclosed a bank post-bill of one hundred and fifty pounds, to cover any expenses that may be incurred, the residue to be retained by yourself, as a remuneration

for your kindness and trouble: a further sum of twenty pounds is also enclosed for the widow Penguin, though it does not appear that she is worthy of such bounty. You will be pleased to acknowledge the receipt of this, addressed to XX., No. 19, Lincoln's Inn Old Square.'

"There," said the worthy lawyer, "that is the result of my efforts, and that is all I know upon the subject. Time and patience will, doubtless, clear up the mystery. My conviction was, that poor Penguin acted under orders, and that you had parents or protectors somewhere."

Then, as I began to shed tears, why, I really knew not, for my heart rejoiced at being saved from the workhouse, one of the ladies observed, "You ought not to weep, but be thankful that my brother has been instrumental in rescuing you from the miseries that would have been your lot had you remained where you were, or had you effected your purpose in running away. Be a good boy, and submit patiently to the decrees of Providence, and, in the meantime——"

"As your cat has carried off his larder, Jane," exclaimed Mr. Steers, "suppose you give him a mouthful of cold chine and a glass of the old cider, then let him be introduced to a tub of hot water, and the sooner these rags are burned the better. Pho! my old parchments are more fragrant: bodies and souls appear equally filthy in these workhouses."

Although I was too young to comprehend all the uncertainties, and the moral ambiguity of my position, or to form any other conclusions than those which emanated from the moment, I was deeply affected at the thoughts of quitting the village where I had been brought up, and where I had now found such kind protectors. I determined, therefore, to make an effort to avert what I considered a great misfortune, so, after twisting about my tattered cap, and fidgeting for some time, I took courage, and said, "O, sir, I thank you and the ladies for your goodness, but can't you let me stay with you? I will work for my bread, and no doubt the person who wrote the letter won't mind where I am, if so be it is not in the workhouse. I can

write a smartish hand, and might help you, sir, in time, as Mr. Eliab did, and I'd take as much care of the cat," added I, turning imploringly to its mistress, "as if it were my own sister. O do, sir! you are my only friend, and if you send me away, may be they'll serve me as Dame Penguin did."

Hereupon I fell to crying with such sincerity, that it drew tears from the ladies, who both exclaimed, "Brother, what think you? Don't you suppose it possible to make the offer to this Mr. XX. through the medium of the paper? As the boy says, and this with discretion beyond his years, it is probable that the parties concerned will not mind where he is, provided he is brought up respectably. Surely they cannot feel any deep interest in one whom they have so long neglected."

"We do not know that," replied Mr. Steers, "and have no right to question their motives, or to attempt to unravel the mystery in which the affair is enveloped. It is evident the parties concerned are well to do in the world, and will not desert him. We must, therefore, obey

instructions; and, as you said just now, Jane, the day will probably come when we shall hear of your young protégé being rewarded for his past sufferings. There, there, my honest boy," added he, "dry up your tears, go with Jane, and, when you are a little purified, we will set to work, and rig you out."

By dint of an abundance of soap and water, and the activity of the good old ladies, who seemed to have as much pleasure in fitting me out as children have in dressing their dolls, I was soon equipped from head to foot in ready-made clothes from the market-town, and was able to make my appearance in a manner that seemed to give great satisfaction to my friends; and, in less than a week, I was to proceed to my destination. In the meantime, although my heart revolted at the thoughts of encountering people who had treated me with such brutality, and though I was unwilling to exhibit myself in my new attire, for fear of being laughed at by my old playfellows, I went to take leave of Dame Penguin, who was established at her brothers'. On approaching the cottage

I met one of the sons crying, from the effects of a merciless flogging, inflicted upon him by his uncle. The poor lad, who scarcely recognised me in my new clothes, no sooner saw who it was, than, forgetting his pain, he ran forward, and shook me affectionately by the hand, a tenderness that redoubled when I presented him with two handkerchiefs and a packet of buns, which Miss Steers had given me for the two brothers. "Mother! mother!" said he, as soon as he had devoured half his portion, "mother, come down! there's Jack from work'us in bran new rigging. Dang me, Jack," continued he, poking in another bun, "if this be work'us fare, I wish we were there instead of with uncle. O, Jack, we have a cruel time of it!—you don't know what it is to be 'prentice to a smuggler. If poor father were alive, they wouldn't dare to treat us as this 'un; and you wouldn't believe it, Jack, when they runs the goods, they hides them up in squire's woods, and the keepers winks at it, and so does squire, for that helps to pay rents, and that's all he thinks on. Look here," added he, showing his

bruised arms, and bidding me feel the bumps on his head, "I got this for telling the truth, when the custom'us officers asked what I knew of the trade. Brother's abed sick, and if they go on at this rate, we shall lay altogether afore long in the churchyard,—oh! I wish I were in work'us."

"You'd soon repent of that, Ned," answered I; "it's a foul, wicked place, where they do nothing but eat and swear, and none are forced to work, only the children. God be thanked, owing to Mr. Steers, and the ladies' goodness, I am no longer there. They gave me these fine clothes by order of some people up in London; and, Ned, I'm come to wish you all goodbye: I'm going to-morrow to some place a long way off, by Plymouth coach."

"Coach!" exclaimed he; "what, ride in a coach!—well, I never could a believed this! and are you a real gemman?"

"I don't know what I am, rightly, Ned, only Mr. Steers got a letter from London to pay for these things, and twenty pounds for mother."

"Twenty pounds for mother! but here she

comes; and I hear uncle's voice, and if he catches me, he'll beat me. Mind," added he, "you don't tell him of the money, or he'll rob mother of it, as he has of everything else." Then, shaking me by the hand, he crept round the corner, and I never saw him more.

The astonishment of the widow at the metamorphosis in my appearance was not less than that of her son; and this increased when I told her to go to Mr. Steers to receive the twenty pounds, and repeated what little I knew of the change in my destiny. Whether it were remorse for her heartless behaviour to me, or vexation at having lost the superintendence of so valuable a charge, I cannot tell, but she seemed much affected; and when she had given vent to her emotion, said, "Indeed, Master Peregrine, I wish you well. I won't say that I ever loved you as my own child, that would be against nature; but if I had known that you were not poor James's son, and I hadn't been afraid of my brothers, you should have shared what I could give; but that is not much, for brothers treat me sadly, and when I've nothing

left, they'll turn me upon the parish, perhaps. But I've made my own bed, and must abide by it: but here comes Richard—mind you do not tell him of the money."

I now heard the rough voices of the smuggler and his brother, but having no inclination to face the two brutes, I seized the widow by the hand, bade her hastily good-bye, saying I had no time to spare, and returned as fast as I could through the churchyard to Mr. Steers, not, however, without being pursued by some of the village lads, who were playing at marbles under the porch, and who gathered round me to gaze upon my clothes, and hooted me as Gentleman Jack.

The rest of the day was passed in completing the preparations for my departure, and in listening to the homilies of the worthy lawyer and his sisters, who, although they were as ignorant of my destinies as I was myself, not only prophesied that fortunate prospects were in store for me, but exhorted me to a life of diligence, truth, and honesty, in such simple and comprehensive language as was well calculated to affect my youthful mind.

They were indeed good people, with all that purity, single-heartedness, and powerful good sense which so eminently distinguish a vast portion of the middling classes in England. They knew nothing of the world from practice, and here, perhaps, their ignorance was real bliss; but they had penetrated its fallacies and deceptions, by the mere force of strong intuitive comprehension; and, beyond a little jealousy at the two-horse chaise of the rival attorney, neither sighed for its vanities, nor envied its enjoyments. The chicaneries, sophistry, and selfish workings of the legal profession had no ways corrupted Mr. Steers, nor had the narrow sphere of a secluded country life, or the still more embittering effects of early disappointments, cramped the minds of his sisters. He loved the law, not so much as an instrument of wealth to himself, as of justice to others; and they rejoiced in his prosperity, because it enlarged the circle of their bounties, and increased their means of doing good.

The life of this worthy family was, in fact, one series of external benevolence and internal

gratification. Their brother was to them a model of perfection, and they to him a source of continued satisfaction. Whilst yet a young man, the same blow had deprived him of his wife and only child. His sisters had replaced these dear objects in his heart and at his fire-side, and had rendered that fire-side a focus of constant happiness. His sole thought was how he might best contribute to their innocent enjoyments—their only ambition how they might most readily minister to his comforts. Theirs was fraternal love, that purest of all earthly affections, in its most unalloyed form. It is true, the Misses Steers evinced more than one of those symptoms that are said to be indicative of decided old maidenism. They loved their cat beyond all God's creatures, (next to their brother;) they had a wondrous faith in calomel, fleecy hosiery, protestant ascendency, gossip, and treacle-posset; whilst they entertained a no less determined aversion to wet feet, flirting by moonlight, Methodist tracts, short petticoats, and the list of marriages in the County Chronicle. But with all this, they were indulgent

to the failings of their neighbours. They pitied those who differed from them in creed, but considered all denominations of Christians as sheep of the same fold. They had made baby-linen for more than one poor deluded victim of frailty, and never boasted of their charity; they laughed heartily at a novel, and their small collection of books contained some of the best English authors on morality, history, and philosophy, which they were accustomed to read to their brother upon the long winter's evenings. How blessed should I have thought myself had I been permitted to remain under their care! But it was determined otherwise; so, after receiving half-a-crown pocket-money in a new purse, the key of a hair-trunk, which held my wardrobe, a large cake, a ball of packthread, and a world of good advice, much of which I lost by falling asleep, I bade adieu with a bursting heart to my kind protectors, and proceeded on the following morning to the adjacent public-house, where the clang of the guard's horn announced the approach of the London coach.

CHAPTER V.

My first appearance upon any stage—Those who do not love politics, or ethics, had better skip this long chapter, or they will chance to follow my example, and fall asleep.

Directions having been given to Mr. Steers to keep me a front place outside, I perched myself upon the roof behind the coachman, whose colleague on the hinder boot, received strict injunctions to take care of me until I reached my destination.

"All's right!" a stamp, and a whistle, and away sprang wheelers and leaders with me and my fortunes, or rather, to judge by the manner in which I sobbed, with my misfortunes.

It was a bright and sparkling day in February. A soft and balmy air, forerunner of the

spring, called forth the early notes of the wild birds, and invigorated the groups of cattle, whose sleek coats glistened with a golden tint as they browsed in the surrounding paddocks. The light hoarfrost, which still clung to the leafless branches, or spread in snowy wreaths under the shaded hedge-rows, was fast melting into crystal drops beneath the beams of the mid-day sun, whose rays spangled the streams and ponds, or lit up the fair expanse of wood and dale, which stretched on either side of the road, unveiling, as the haze cleared up, all the picturesque loveliness of the fertile and luxuriant county through which we sped. As the vehicle ascended the first hill, I wiped away the tears that dimmed my eyes, and turned to gaze, perhaps for the last time, upon the village where I had passed so many days of childish happiness.

There it lay, embedded in a frame of evergreen plantations, which here and there ran down to the verge of the sea, sweeping its very spray with their feathering branches. In the midst of the clustering habitations, half masked

by a clump of cedars, rose the church-steeple, its well-known vane glistening in the sun-beams, and its long-pointed altar window sparkling like a mass of diamonds. Beneath was the burial-place, its grey tombstones peering above the dark herbage; and there was the lonely yew-tree, which marked the last resting-place of the good pilot, and my foster-brethren. I shuddered as I thought of the sexton's warning, and cast my eye upon the sandbank, where the shattered hull of the wrecked Indiaman still gloomed above the treacherous wave, which now calmly pattered around her. Seaward, stretched our beautiful but perilous bay, studded with fishing craft, their tiny sails out-topped by the lofty gaff of the revenue cutter, which, by its press of canvas, seemed bent upon some expedition beyond the forelands, whose abrupt and shattered sides rose frowning above the distant waters. Oxover-hill, its park, and extensive covers, formed the back-ground to the landscape, and in the midst of these was the old hall itself, its Italian architecture being well suited to the rich vegetation and genial climate

of western England. A turn of the road suddenly concealed the whole from me: once more I caught a glimpse of the church, and all was hidden. Were I to live a hundred years, I could not feel so lonely, so desolate, as I did at that moment, and my anguish was rendered more intense, since I was ashamed to give vent to my tears. But these emotions were of short duration: the natural buoyancy of youth, the rapid motion, the ever-varying scenery, the novelty of my situation,—for I had never before ridden upon anything but the shaft of a cart, or behind a post-chaise—together with the conversation of those around me, soon came to my relief, and I was enabled to examine my travelling companions, or rather, they began to examine me.

On my right was a gentleman, whom the coachman, a privileged, quaint character, called colonel. On my left, sat a bluff but kind-looking man, who, from his appearance and language, evidently belonged to the navy. The box was occupied by an individual who, I supposed, was another coachman, but who, it ap-

pears, was a young Cornish squire returning to Oxford. My error in mistaking him for a brother of the whip was very natural; for a shallow-brimmed hat was cocked on one side of his head, his neck was enveloped by the numerous folds of a shawl-handkerchief, his rough, white top-coat was decorated wih rows of horn buttons; another box-coat with many capes was twisted round his knees, between which sat a savage-looking bull-terrier; his hands were thrust into his pockets, and when he turned round, I saw that a hole was bored in one of his fine white teeth, to enable him to squirt out his saliva in a more orthodox fashion, whilst he turned a quid, or something like it, in his mouth, as he descanted with the coachman upon the merits of his cattle, in a kind of slang which, to me, was nearly incomprehensible.

"What, going to school, my boy?" said the colonel to me, after we had proceeded a short distance—"going to school, eh?" I made no other answer, than a sigh, or sob; indeed, how could I? for I knew not where I was going. "Well," continued he, "I like to see a lad show

some feeling upon these occasions: it proves that he loves his home, and that those whom he has left behind have made that home happy."

"Ay, ay, sir," observed the person on my left—"you are right. Those are the true soundings, if the old boys would but understand it; make friends of the youngsters, say I; trust in them that you may obtain their confidence: without which there can be no peace aboard. Teach them to look upon their homes as harbours, where they may bear up, and lay snug after a cruise; and if they hoist signals of distress, man a boat, and shove off to their assistance. Many a fine craft has been cast away for want of a little timely help: there is little prospect of their ever being sea-worthy afterwards."

"I fear," rejoined the soldier, that over indulgence is often more pernicious than the other extreme."

"*Medio tutissimus*," exclaimed the Oxonian, "as my governor always says, when I ask for a rouleau, and he only forks out a pony."

"Pony! I knows one of the cleverest between Land's-end and Exeter," interposed

the coachman—"a regular out-and-outer, what can canter under a five-bar, and then jump over it like a greyhound; just the thing, squire, for you to tittup to cover."

"I see no necessity for either extreme," resumed the seaman. "All I argue for is firmness without severity, indulgence without weakness. Meet them with smiles, and not with frowns; do not blow great guns for mere trifles. Fire a shot athwart their bows, but do not hull them, merely because they do not reef topsails as smartly as old hands. If they behave well, serve them out an extra glass of grog."

"Not grog, asking your pardon, sir; a cup of tea, with half a thimbleful of brandy in it, now and then: that's my receipt," said the coachman. "Bless you, sir, I've worked on this road, summer and winter, night and day, for twenty years, and never knew what it was to lay by, only for a day or two, when I was tackled to my old woman; and here I am as fresh as a four-year-old. Now I 'tributes all to 'voiding spirits. A drop of cider, a sprinkling of ale, or may be a top-up of sherry after supper, that's no offence:

there's more of my purfession, and of yours too, mayhap, that's floored by trying to keep out cold winds with hot liquors, than ever breaks down from work or weather."

"That's proper slow coaching, old Muff," answered the young squire. "Tea! why, you might as well lap ditch-water. I flatter my unsophisticated wig, that I know every crack dragsman and shooter, in and out of Oxford, and I never saw one that gibbed at a twinkling of blue ruin, or a spice of jump-at-Betty. Egad! there's that jolly cove my tutor, who, by-the-bye, has turned out some as clever tory colts as ever came to the post at St. Stephens, he makes the best milk-punch of any man in college. He has taught me to take a first degree in that, at any rate. His motto, is—'*Aut bibat aut abeat et recte*'—anglicè, 'fill your glass or toddle;' that's the time of day, as old Tully says."

"I don't care a linch-pin for old Tooly, or any other of them, whether they be guards or coachmen," rejoined the advocate for temperance. "All I know is, they can't drink and work long."

"You are right, Mr. Ferret," observed the

colonel; "it was Lord Burleigh, I think, who said, that the only ambition of a drunkard was to be praised for his being able to carry more liquor than other men;—a commendation better fitted for a brewer's-horse or a drayman, than a gentleman."

"A brewer's horse!" exclaimed the Oxonian, "do you know the old song—

'O that I were a brewer's horse, one quarter of a year!
I'd turn my head where stood my tail, and drink up all the beer.'"

Then turning to the coachman, he added, "Did you ever hear of a certain Sir William Temple, master Ferret?"

"Can't say as I recollects him, sir," answered the other. "Bless you, squire, we've such a lot of gentlemen rides with us, we can't remember one in a hundred."

"No wonder, master Ferret," replied the squire, smiling, "for he was booked by the Never-come-back, long before the time when a man thought himself especially protected by divine Providence if he crawled from Exeter to London in five days, in one of those break-joint machines which our unwashed ancestors called flying

coaches! Jolly times and fast those, when three miles an hour was sharp travelling, and when the passengers dined at ten in the morning, upon hot surloins and mulled ale, and halted a day at Salisbury to re-set their dislocated joints, report progress, and drink a gallon of Canary to their further good fortune. But I'll give you old Billy Temple's sentiment; 'The first bottle for myself—the second for my friends—the third for good fellowship, and the fourth for mine enemies.' Four bottles, by Bacchus!"

"Bottles, sir!" exclaimed the colonel—"why, unless I am much mistaken, Sir William, who was a moderate man and an advocate for sobriety, said glasses."

"*Recte Domine*," answered the student; "but in those days, your *poculi* were not the little thimble-rig concerns that we degenrrate creatures sip out of; they held nearly a quart, and so I'm within the mark in reading it bottles."

"If all your reading is magnified in the same proportion as your potations," replied the colonel, "you will do credit to your tutor."

"Apropos of that worthy," rejoined the Oxo-

nian, "if ever you pay me a visit, I'll present you to him. He rejoiceth in the nick-name of the *Bottlean*, a pretty play on the Library, and well merited, for he is as full of claret as t'other is of classics. Now his way of managing his pupils is this—*Intonsi:* says he to us—wisdom, and wisdom's truth, is not in the wig, but in the bottle—*ergo*, instead of examining you on an empty stomach and parched tracheæ, wine with me or I with you, and if you know anything, I'll soon decant it—I'll have the truth as naked as Moses in the bulrushes. And he has good authority for his proceeding. Do you remember what the Brundusian says? I'll give it you in English toggery, for the benefit of old mizzler here:

> 'Wise are the kings who never choose a friend,
> Till with full cups they have unmasked his soul,
> And seen the bottom of his deepest thoughts.'"

"Horace borrowed the image from Seneca, sir, who says that drinking does not produce but betrays faults," answered the colonel; "and certainly, if that be your tutor's object, he could not devise a more efficient method of discovering

those of his pupils. But, after all, Horace was a greater poet than moralist: you had better avoid some of his precepts, and attend to those of Shakspeare, who says—'One draught above heat makes a man a fool: the second mads him, and the third drowns him.'" Then turning to the sailor, he added in a half-whisper, "There you have an instance of the effects of over-indulgence. You will not, perhaps, believe that the youth before you, whose ambition it is, to be thought a hard-drinker, and to out-groom his groom in dress and language, should be heir to one of the first families in the West, and destined, ere long, to hold a place in the senate."

"Yes, I can," rejoined the other, especially in an age which suggested to Sheridan the bitter line, 'Peers mount the box, and horses mount the stage.'"

"But, to return to the question, which we had nearly lost sight of: you may rely upon it, that the best way with youngsters, is to encourage and reward them liberally when they do well, and to admonish or punish them with temper and moderation, when they disobey signals,

—morally punish them, I mean: no swearing—no violence. Do not make a brute of yourself in order to make men of them. A father should never raise his hand towards his child unless to support him. To be bred and educated as a gentleman, and scourged like a common vagrant, is enough to ruin any generous mind. It is bad enough in a pedagogue, but detestable in a parent."

"In that we cordially concur," replied the colonel, "I abhor flogging."

"Why, colonel," exclaimed the coachman, who caught the last words, as he was severely punishing the wheelers with a short extra whip—that's all very well for a fancy drag, but it won't do for us, with bolters and blind 'uns. There be some teams, to be sure, that will jump off, and go the pace to the end, without wanting any persuasion, but——"

"You're right, master Ferret, for once: half the fun in handling the ribbons with one hand, is to be able to touch up the tits with the other: isn't it, old slow coach?" exclaimed the Oxonian, nudging his neighbour sharply on the side, by way of enforcing his observation.

This familiarity seemed little relished by the other, for he only replied with a grunt.—"I asks your pardon, squire, but if you keeps a shoving of your elbow into my near side ribs, how the 'ell be I to drive?" Then laying his lash artistly across the leaders, he continued—"Not flog, sir! why I should just like to see any man on the road keep these four rum uns together without a crumb of whipcord, now and then. Why there's the bishop——"

"What!" exclaimed the soldier, interrupting him, "my friend the bishop of the diocese? They tell me he is one of the best whips in England."

"No, no, I don't mean my lord," answered the coachman laughing; "though, to be sure, he often rides with me incog. like, and I always lets him have a spell at the ribbons—no, I means that ere black off-leader."

"Why, in heaven's name, do you call the horse by such a dignified name?" demanded the other.

"Why—'cause he's down slap on his knees every five minutes," answered Mr. Ferret, "as all bishops should be, leastway I expect so.—Bless you," continued he, "we've 'propriate names for 'em all. There's that hot chesnut-roarer at

the near wheel, we christened him Soldier, 'cause he's been fired all round; and this here punchy hoss what's all of a lather, he's such a devil to feed, he'd eat a binn-full of corn, sieve and all—so we calls him the Alderman; and that ere raw-boned vicious near leader, we calls him Lawyer, 'cause he won't put his neck to the collar without being well paid aforehand."

These appellations seemed to amuse the young squire greatly, but Mr. Ferret's wit was not exhausted; for we had not proceeded far, before we met one of the heavy double-bodied coaches in vogue at that period. The brothers of the whip raised their elbows as they passed, exchanging the usual courtesies of the road, but perceiving his friend's vehicle completely empty, he turned to the Oxonian and said, "Now, squire, I'll give you a bone to pick."

"Give it old Crab here," returned the squire, pointing to his dog.

"I means a riddle, squire, and here it is—Why is that ere empty machine unlike any two christians?"

"Hang me," replied the other laughing, "if I

can see, in the first place, why it *should* be like —I'm stuck up."

"Are you though? Why then I'll tell you, and you may book it," rejoined Mr. Ferret; "it's cause it's got two bodies and never a soul."

When the laugh which this sally created had subsided, the colonel again addressed me, saying, "Well my boy, you did not say to what school you are going?"

"Indeed, sir, I do not know where I am going," answered I, "unless it be to Salisbury, where I am to be left till called for."

"What! booked like a parcel, young snob?" exclaimed the squire. "Well, that's one way of forwarding live luggage. Why, they ought to have chalked 'glass' on your back—'this side upwards, to be kept dry.'"

"The guard has care of me, sir, and Mr. Steers gave me this new top coat. Besides, sir, I have been out many a long winter's night in the chops of the channel, waiting for the homeward bound, without a stitch of dry clothes on, and I don't care for wet or dry," retorted I, somewhat nettled at the squire's observation.

"At sea!" exclaimed the captain; "in the navy, eh? What ship?"

"I never served aboard any ship, sir, only I was brought up in the fishing line, until poor James Penguin was lost in the life-boat."

"James Penguin!" ejaculated the officer—"James Penguin! I remember a fine fellow of that name, who was boatswain a board a man-of-war brig, of which I was lieutenant. I wonder if it was the same."

"I cannot tell, sir," replied I, "but may be it was, for the night before the wreck, he showed me a boatswain's whistle, which was given to him by the captain of his ship—the Tearer."

"The Tara, you mean—yes, that is it," rejoined the officer. "Poor fellow!—drowned eh? I recollect him well—a great favourite with the captain, whose life he saved on boarding a French corvette. And he could not have saved a finer seaman or better man. But, as matters turned out, it would have been better if my old commander had fallen in action, than end as he did."

"Drowned also, sir, or ingloriously carried

off by yellow fever, I suppose?" said the colonel.

"No, he was a Catholic; and as, with our confounded laws he could not rise in the service, he retired in disgust to his native country, or rather to what, out of derision I suppose, we call the Sister Island. There he fell in love with the daughter of a leading malcontent, and thence got connected with the disaffected. Thinking to mend matters by trying to capsize the government, he joined heart and hand in the rebellion, was one of the principal leaders under poor Ned Fitzgerald, and narrowly escaped sharing his fate. A reward was offered for his capture; but he got sheer off; and, as they could not chop off his head, they cut off his tail,—that is, they attainted his small property. For some time all traces of him were lost. At length it was discovered that he had reached America, where he died of a broken heart, and, as I heard say, his young widow did not long survive him."

"You allude to Captain Belmont, do you not?" demanded the colonel.

" I do," replied the sailor.

" I knew him well in former times," rejoined the other: " we served together in the expedition to the Helder; he was a gallant and distinguished sailor. He would have been as irreproachable as he was dauntless, had he not linked himself with the rebels. My regiment, which formed part of the corps under Cornwallis, was engaged in the affair of Enniscarthy, where I saw him in the rebel army fighting with the desperation of a lion. I believe we might have knocked him off, but somehow or another, one had not the heart to kill so fine a fellow. Report spoke lightly of his wife, as an ambitious and heartless woman. She it was that lured him to his ruin. A sad misfortune!"

" It was a still greater misfortune, sir, his being an Irishman and a Catholic. Egad! it is very well for us, who have no impediment to our advancement, save patronage and parliamentary interest, and these, at least in our service, are no trifling obstacles, though in yours they may be overcome by a long purse; but when a conscientious man must either re-

nounce his faith or his profession—when he must either become an apostate, or be laid up in ordinary like a sheer hulk, and this in the prime of life, it is enough to make him splice on to the very devil."

"Surely, sir, you do not mean to become the apologist of rebellion and treason?" exclaimed the colonel.

"No," answered the sailor, "I abhor treason and sedition. I execrate disaffection and anarchy as much as the most loyal and devoted of all his Majesty's subjects. But I no less cordially deprecate the impolicy and injustice, which generate treason, and convert a third of our countrymen into political parias.

"I will not yield, in tolerance, to you or any other person," replied the colonel; "but I neither see in the existing laws a palliation for sedition, nor in their modification a prospect of amendment for the state of Ireland."

"I agree with you in the last part of your argument, and that only," exclaimed the Oxonian, "for we may reverse the old saying in regard to the Irish. With them it is *ægrotat*

animo magis quam corpore. What the confounded bog-trotters want, is bread to eat with their filthy buttermilk. It is all Betty Martin legislating for the mind, if you do not provide for the body."

"But if you cut the grass under their feet, how are they to make hay, sir? That is to say, if you bar them from all employment, how are they to obtain bread?" demanded the sailor.

"That may be applicable to a few, very few," returned the colonel, "but not to the community at large."

"That's the point, sir," said the Oxonian, "there you've hit the right nail on the head. If you were to open the doors of concession, and let in the whole pack of papists to sussworry at their leisure—nay, if you were to transplant the conclave of cardinals, and place them on the bench of bishops, or bring the old whipper with his red petticoats from Rome, and pop him on the woolsack, I should like to know whether 'the gem of the sea' would be a crumb the better for it—*quoad* its essential wants.

Besides, the Catholics do not seek for equality, but supremacy. Their battle-cry is justice—their object tyranny. The very essence of their creed admits of no equality, no rivalry, no neutrality. It is essentially egotistical, and anti-protestant to the very marrow. Give them a pair of horses, and they will want four. *L'appetit vient en mangeant*, as my sister's French governess says, when she gets her second wind at the end of the first course. For my part, I have made up my mind; I see no salvation for England, but in upholding the established Church in all its rights, immunities, and privileges. Weaken one of them, and you'll floor both king and constitution. If ever I have a seat in the house, the whilk, God be praised, is cock sure, seeing that my governor has the fifteen votes of his borough snug in his pocket, you shall see what I will do."

"And what may that be, sir?" demanded the sailor.

"Why, my uncle, who is my man of straw until I am of age, will waddle the Chilterns. I shall take my seat, and go through the old

process of seconding an anti-Catholic address, and then vote against Emancipation and Reform *per fas et nefas*. If I am queered, rely upon it I will die game."

"Then, begging your pardon, sir," answered the captain, "the longer your minority lasts,—or the sooner the borough of which you speak is taken out of your father's pocket, the better for the country. Such representative corruption, and such uncompromising intolerance, are enough to cause the dismemberment of the empire, and bring the whole by the board; and the worst of it is, your sentiments are, I fear, but the echo of the majority of those, who are launched into life from the same dock-yard"

"I take it, sir, I've hit the raw though," retorted the young tory squire; "perhaps you are yourself a Catholic, a wolf in sheep's clothing. If so, recollect I mean no personal offence: I only put on the gloves to have a set-to at principles."

"Do not make yourself uneasy, sir," answered the sailor. "I am as staunch a Protestant as the king himself, who is the titular

defender of the faith. I am ready to lay down my life for one or the other, if they were in peril. I should rejoice if all men were of the same persuasion as myself, for I think it the purest, as it ought to be the most liberal. My ancestors were Huguenots—they abandoned the Romish religion because of its intolerance; its vexations and tyranny were insupportable. They fought to burst their own chains asunder —not to impose them upon others. Having gained that object, all that I, their descendant, ask for, is an extension of the same privileges to the whole of my fellow-countrymen. How, sir, can you expect tranquillity or fidelity from Ireland, if you treat her people like dogs?"

"You perhaps think that I'm better versed in dog's-meat, than dogma," said the Oxonian, shaking the ears of Crab. "I'faith, I have a sprinkling of the national tenacity of the poor brute in me: but what right have the Catholics to expect tolerance for themselves, when they deny it to all others? Where are we heretics booked for, according to their way-bill? Why, to

t'other place, as the black preacher said. I'm not much given to solace my leisure hours with the chaste joys of theology, or to disport in the crack-brainings of controversy, but look at history, and where will you find tolerance on the part of the Romish church, when it had the whip in its hands? Is it in the Pope's bulls? In the Council of Trent? In the Edict of Nantes? In the Inquisition? In the bloody acts of Mary—or the still more monstrous cruelties of Philip? Turn to Spain, to Germany, and the Netherlands, and they'll give you a fine account of Catholic tolerance. By-the-bye, I remember reading somewhere, the answer that was given by the synod of Louvain to the Emperor of Austria, who only wished to extend to his Protestant Netherland subjects a portion of those liberties the whole of which the Catholics demand from us."

"And what was the reply?" asked the sailor; "it could not be more peremptory than our constant rejection of the Catholic claims?"

"Wasn't it, though?" retorted the collegian; "you shall hear; 'None of your throwing the

snaffle upon their d——d heretical necks, old Joe,' said the *patres conscripti*, in answer to the emperor's message. 'Bear them up as tight as wax, or they'll kick over the bars and floor the coach. Tolerance would play old gooseberry. It would cause perpetual wrangling, milling, and set us all at loggerheads.' 'And why?' demanded the kaiser. 'Because,' responded they, 'our blessed religion regards all heretics, without exception, as victims devoted to eternal perdition. This,' added the old coves, 'is the invariable maxim which the Catholic creed inculcates, and insists upon as an essential dogma and immutable article of its faith.' Now, commodore, I think I have got you at the point of fox."

"Fox!" exclaimed the sailor, who either intended to play upon the word, or had perhaps forgotten Shakspeare—"Fox! pray do not couple the name of that great statesman with anything so illiberal. No, sir, the instance you adduce merely proves the bigoted intolerance of the Catholic hierarchy, and not the wisdom or justice of their doctrines. It also proves

that the Emperor Joseph and his advisers were more enlightened than the people they governed; whereas, sir, in my humble opinion, it is just the reverse with us. What was it that produced the first schism in the church, and led to that endless series of disasters, wars, and revolutions, that so long deluged every part of Europe with blood? Why, the same unwise system that you would perpetuate."

"The ablest and best statesmen England has produced, have vainly essayed to find a remedy for the evils complained of," answered my right-hand neighbour. "Every succeeding monarch and government have been actuated by the best intentions."

"Our dominion has been that of the sword, and not of the olive-branch," replied the gentleman on my left. "Why was the nation deprived of the services of poor Belmont, and hundreds of others?"

"Because they were rebels, and deserved to swing—*sus per col* would be my verdict for the whole of them, if the law were in my hands," interposed the Oxonian.

This liberal remark produced a most protracted discussion, the pith of which may be found dilated through the parliamentary debates on the subject of Catholic emancipation.

I had listened as long as I could to this dry conversation, of which the only part that interested me related to the poor pilot and his former captain. At length I was so overcome with drowsiness, that I fell into a sound sleep, from which I was awakened by the naval officer, who said to me,

"So, youngster, you were brought up to the sea; are you a son or relation of the old boatswain?"

"No, sir," replied I, "I am an orphan, and was left to his care:" and then I narrated what little I knew of my history, to which he paid great attention.

"It is a mysterious affair," said he, "and unless you are the son of some old shipmate, I cannot understand why you should have been consigned to his hands. However, it is as clear as the Eddystone light that

'There's a sweet little cherub who sits up aloft
To watch o'er the life of poor Jack.'

as the song says—so cheer up, my hearty, and for my old shipmate Penguin's sake, I've only to say, as you seem a well-disposed lad, if you feel any turn for a sea-faring life, and can get leave from the frog-in-a-hole gentleman in London, I will get you entered as a volunteer, and give you a berth on board my frigate. I am going up to town to make my bow to the lords —and then up anchor, and away to have a slap at the Mounseers."

"Thank you, kindly, sir," answered I, trembling, for I had never before spoken to or sat by the captain of a king's ship, "but if I might be so bold, I always disliked the sea, and now the very sight of it makes me downhearted. I shall be long before I forget all I have suffered from it."

"Not you, my boy," rejoined the kind-hearted captain. "No! when you have lived as long as I have done, and met with as many squalls and baffling winds, you will acknowledge the wise and benevolent organization of Provi-

dence, which gradually tends to obliterate from our minds the remembrance of past sufferings, and thus bountifully tempers our sorrows and our pains, whilst it endows us with the more grateful faculty of reviving those recollections which console, and, as it were, regenerate our hearts."

"Egad, I believe you are right, sir," said the Oxonian, "as far as physical pain goes. '*Si levis, facilè fertur, si vehemens, certè brevis futurus est,*' as Cicero says; though, saving your presence, I cannot boast of its not having had posterior effects upon me. I believe I had 'to stay,' anglicè, to be flogged, at Eton as often as any one; but mind you, never for not being able 'to do.' The thickest numskull never admits being stuck up in lessons; and yet," added he, removing his hand from his pocket to a more significant position, "may I be most pre-eminently diddled if I have any recollection of the operation *ad-hoc;* except that the doctor, who ought to have taken *castigat ridendo* for his motto, was wont to grin over my nether man, and handle his implement with as much

gusto as if he had been cutting a haunch, or fingering a punch-ladle."

"Your mind must be very happily constituted," said the colonel to the sailor, "if you can so readily forget your sorrows and pains."

"I know not whether my soul be differently moulded from those of others," replied the sailor. "One thing, however, I do know, that I possess too little stoicism, and too much sensitiveness: for I am as peppery as a bad cook's dinner, but my passion soon blows over. I feel pleasure, until my very marrow seems electrified, and I suffer from moral pain, until my very arteries burn as if filled with molten lead. But, at the same time, although actual enjoyment has its delights, anticipation and retrospection are the sources of infinitely greater enjoyment."

"Then," said the Oxonian, "you think that the anticipation of dissipation is preferable to the dissipation of anticipation?"

"If you mean that anticipation generally exceeds reality, most certainly," rejoined the captain. "Yes, I love to gild the future with

hopes and idealities far beyond the compass, perhaps, of possibility, and to array the past in robes of splendour, which console me for the darkness of the present. Whether musing in the seclusion of my cabin, or gazing upon the wide expanse of waters that surrounds me a thousand leagues from land, from home, from all that is dear to me, my greatest enjoyment is in looking forward to a re-union with those I love, and in recalling the scenes and images of by-gone days, and departed friends. Forgetting that they are gone, I can repaint the one and revive the other with minute fidelity."

"You seem to be endowed with a most enviable faculty," said the soldier. "To be able to cast away care, banish sorrow, and revive enjoyments, is the very acmé of epicurean philosophy, the more remarkable in a man of your profession."

"O sir! we sailors have more time upon our hands for meditation, and stand more in need of what you call philosophy, than any other class of men," returned the captain.

The shades of night had already closed upon the surrounding scenery, and the mellow beams

of a full moon were reflected in silvery streaks upon the winding surface of the lovely Ex. In a few minutes more, we ascended the high-street of Exeter and arrived at the Inn, whence, after commencing a hearty supper, the prospect of which I enjoyed more than the tedious discussion upon politics and morality, that had kept me yawning during the greater part of the day, we were again called to our places by the guard, who declared we were already five minutes behind time. This produced considerable grumbling on the part of the passengers, for at the moment our protector entered, two fine roast rabbits and some custards made their appearance merely to tantalise us, there being no alternative between our leaving them, or the coach leaving us.

The squire, however, seemed little disposed to submit to these tricks upon stage-coach travellers; for, calling to his dog, as he tossed off a goblet of hot negus, and threw down his money, he exclaimed, "Play or pay, old Boniface; I'm not to be diddled, *salus ventris suprema lex*,—here, Crab, at him,—cat! cat! cat!"—upon

which the animal immediately sprang upon one rabbit, whilst his master, seizing the other by the leg, marched off with it into the street, where he gave it, with half-a-crown, to a poor, shivering beggar-woman, adding, as he remounted the box, "If all passengers would make it a point to pocket what they have paid for, and are not allowed time to eat, it would soon put an end to this confounded league between dragsmen and innkeepers; though I beg your pardon, gentlemen, for having thus summarily disposed of your share." However equitable this mode of administering prevotal justice might have been, had it occurred to some poor, unknown traveller, it is probable that host, waiters, boots, and bar-maids, aided by constables, would have made him pay dearly for his foray. But what innkeeper would have ventured to resent the waggery of a rich, young, Tory squire, whose powerful family used their run of posting, especially in a town so independent and liberal as the capital of Devon? So Crab quietly bolted his portion beteen his master's legs, and the poor woman carried off hers

to her starving children, or, what is more probable, to the gin-shop, and this amongst the smiles and giggles of horse-keepers and housemaids, one of which latter had to contribute a kiss in addition to the rest of the Oxonian's plunder.

I was going to resume my seat in front, but the guard told me I had better mount behind, and he would make a snug roost for me in the boot. I did as I was bid, and, nestling myself amongst the straw, slept like a top until soon after daylight, when I was aroused from my lair, and informed that we had reached the Green Dragon at Salisbury. My trunk and body were now handed down, and delivered to the care of the innkeeper. The captain having wished me good-bye, not without slipping a seven-shilling piece into my hand, and, telling me I was a goose for not accepting his offer, the coach drove off, and I was ushered into the little sanded parlour of the inn, my eyes moistened with tears, and my heart throbbing with anxiety and impatience to see when and by whom I should be called for.

CHAPTER VI.

I discover that I am a young gentleman, and am wonderfully elated thereat—If you are a courtier, this chapter will excite your bile—I am recommended to follow the example of the Spartan youth, and to lie like a moss-trooper sooner than tell tales out of school—I arrive at Thistle-house Academy—My pedagogue considers quality as an ample set-off against false quantity, and informs me that the best mode of instilling the classics into the head, is by illustrating them with wood-cuts at the other extremity.

So prone is our nature to cling to the smallest object which has any connexion with our home, no matter how humble or miserable that home may be, that I now looked with sentiments of attachment even upon the coach which had conveyed me from Devonshire, and considered

the guard, and above all, the noble-minded captain, as old friends, from whom I was thus separated for ever. I therefore ran to the parlour-window, and watched the departing vehicle, until the winding street concealed the enormous blue bell, embellished with golden circles, and the hairy gentleman, with no other vestments than a girdle of oak leaves, which were painted upon the hind boot—much fitter emblems of some of those bell-mouthed, blue ladies, sparkling in superficial tinsel, whom I have subsequently met with, than of the beautiful savage whom they were meant to represent. Had I known anything of this class of learned ephemera in those days, or not been as ignorant of the poet Persius as I was of the Persians, the back of the coach would have reminded me of Dryden's applicable translation,

"Ye, like the hindmost chariot-wheels, are curst,
Still to be near, but ne'er to be the first;"

as it was, I only thought how blue I looked, or rather, how gloomy was my own situation.

When the last rumbling of the coach-wheels

had died away, a chill came over my young heart that it would be impossible to describe. I sobbed, or rather moaned, so bitterly, that the good-natured landlady came up to me, and soothingly said, "Lauk, my dear, what ails you?" I gave no answer, but made a pitiful face, and, by some accident, put my hands upon my chest, which made her fancy that the seat of my anguish was in my stomach, and not in my heart, for she said, "Ah! it's those nasty Devonshire apples, they're enough to gripe a helephent; they're only fit to be squashed into cider; but I'll get you a glass of peppermint, or a drop of warm ale."

"Oh! it is not that, ma'am," replied I, "I am quite well here."

"Lauk! then, my dear boy," rejoined she, "don't be down-hearted; the holidays will soon come, and then you'll see your par and your mar again. I dare be shot if they're not quite as sorry to lose you, as you be to leave them." This allusion to my parents did but set me crying the faster. This time, however, I raised my hands to my eyes instead of my stomach,

so she continued, "Dear me! you put me in mind of our Billy. Lauk! I thought his poor little heart would have bussted, when my lord the bishop persuaded us to send him up to the grammar school; for my husband, you know, was butler to his lordship, aud a better man and master God never made; and sure enough, how I did cry, and John took on so himself that he couldn't serve his customers. And misfortunes never come singly, for it was club-day of the Royal Bucks, and John was quite beflustered, and there was a pretty to-do; for he drewed small for strong, double XX for Barclay's stout, gave hot with, instead of cold without to the president; mislaid the key of the cupboard, with the club rules and pigtail, and chucked the spitting-box full of sand, instead of a quartern of corn, to Squire Bennett's gig horse. But it's all for the best; for, as I heard the bishop's lady say, when the old hen turkey was chopped by the subscription hounds, and left the polts a running under the bushes, 'God Almighty,' said my lady, 'makes feathers to cover little birds' wings, and teaches them in

due season to hop from twig to twig, and pick up their own victuals, so I have no doubt they'll do very well.' And so it was with Billy; for he came home for Christmas holidays as fat as our mayor, only his clothes, to be sure, was in a terrible mess. But since you a'n't got the stomach-ache, you must be hungry. There's nice tea and fresh eggs, and I'll butter the toast for you myself. It's down at kitchen-hob, and before you've done, Mr. Birchell's servant will be in town. He told me last market-day, he'd orders to call for a young gentleman, as may be this morning." And so saying, off went the voluble landlady to fetch the breakfast.

Although my tears had relieved me, I cannot say that I had found very great "luxury in grief;" for I was naturally of a merry disposition, and had never known care nor sorrow until Christmas-day. But to be separated from every friend and acquaintance, to be abandoned to strangers, and to find myself at twelve years of age mysteriously cast upon the world, and in utter ignorance of my future fate, did, I confess, stir up such a conflict and confusion in my

mind, that my head swam round, a sensation augmented by the whirring dizziness which is the usual result of night-travelling.

But, O vanity ! thou paradise of fools, young and old, high or low, peasant or peer, chambermaid or countess—all bow to thy empire. For what think you, reader, contributed more even than the prospect of a good breakfast to assuage my grief ?—why, being treated as a young gentleman. This was a new light which burst upon my mind like the sudden introduction of a torch into a dark chamber ; it touched a latent fibre, with the existence of which I was hitherto unacquainted : it struck the chord of ambition —the most natural and, if well-directed, the most noble passion that Providence has implanted in man's breast ;—that passion which often leads to emulation, exertion, wealth, and immortal fame ; but, alas ! still oftener to disappointment, misery, misanthropy, and disgraceful death.

Not that I had been devoid, young as I was, of a desire to distinguish myself, and to be admired by the small circle of my village acquaintance ; but the extent of this desire was to be

considered the ugliest grinner, the fastest runner, the boldest swimmer, the most expert hand at climbing a tree after a bird's-nest, and the best fiddler of my age, and, I ought to add, perhaps, the more honourable though not the most difficult, wish to be considered the first scholar at the day-school. But these two little words, "young gentleman," awakened novel sensations, that inspired me with more elevated sentiments, and gave a sudden developement to my intellectual faculties. To these sensations I have been indebted for support in hours of deep affliction and severe trial. I determined, since I was a gentleman, that I would shape my conduct accordingly, and under no vicissitude have I ever lost sight of this beacon.

If the landlady had told me that I was a peer, and that a coach and six filled with sacks of gold was coming for me, I should have been bewildered by the one, and should not have known how to dispose of the other. Of the value of money I was ignorant; and as for the lords, they, in my imagination, were far above the rest of all mankind: their condition was as

inconceivable to me as that of divinity itself. I thought they were created by super-human agency, not begotten, for the most part, of gold and political intrigue. I did not know that kings or ministers—insignificant mortals—made peers, sometimes to reward merit, oftener to compensate subserviency, and to satisfy court or party purposes. Heaven forgive my ignorance! I was not aware that lords were frail creatures like other men; that some gloried in driving stage-coaches, and in associating with common bruisers and blacklegs; that others wantonly seduced their friends' wives, and accepted money in exchange for the profligacy of their own; that before kings and princes, they were often the first to bend the knee, and before their inferiors, the last to bow the head.

To be told that I was a young gentleman, was another matter. Of this I could judge in a certain degree by comparison. I had heard the villagers talk of good gentlemen, worthy gentlemen, and charitable gentlemen; I had also heard of others being no gentlemen, which, even in their humble sphere, was the *ne plus ultra* of re-

proach. The bathos of all human misery in my sight was the workhouse; the acmé of all earthly grandeur was a gentleman—a squire. And, although I hated Squire Oxover personally, and thought the vicar no gentleman, I considered the former as the first man in the world next to the king, of whom I had no other conception than what I had formed from devouring his gilt-gingerbread effigy at the village revels. The idea, therefore, of being raised from a parish pauper to a young gentleman was electrifying, and almost overwhelmed me. I ought, however, to observe that I was naturally gentlemanly. I believe I possessed that inherent, precious gift, which cannot always be acquired by art or intercourse with courts; for I have since met individuals who never breathed the atmosphere of a palace, and yet had all the bearing, the enviable, indescribable type of high-bred gentlemen. Again, I have seen courtiers, who have basked their whole lives in the sunny smiles of princes, who nevertheless have had the air of carmen, without any of the polish of their horses' coats, and still less of their generous

qualities; modern Falstaffs, with all the gluttony and buffoonery of old Jack, shorn of his wit. And in this they were perhaps fortunate; for wit is an exotic that withers amidst the ungenial air of courts. Princes require butts to shoot at, not arrows, which, like Congreve rockets, may recoil upon themselves. Wit betokens freedom of soul, equality and superiority of intellect, and these are for other regions than courts. A buffoon, a common jester, may there hold his ground, provided he be a good listener; but woe betide the man of genuine wit, if he dare let fly his bolt: after a few explosions his barrel will burst in his hand. Even though his master be his match—a rare occurrence—he will be overmatched by those who are often matchless for their dulness; they will crush him by the mere *vis inertiæ* of plodding density, or by the more active venom of envy and intrigue.

Not having been in other company than that of fishermen, except during my short residence under Mr. Steers' roof, I was strangely puzzled how to behave myself. I felt that there was a wide difference between my language and

manners, and that of the few gentlemen's sons I had seen at our village cricket-matches, or whom I had accompanied sailing and wild fowl shooting in our bay. But how to imitate them? —there was the rub. I was meditating upon this latter dilemma, when the landlady again made her appearance with breakfast; so I took courage to endeavour to ascertain whether I was really the young gentleman she alluded to, saying, as I crammed a huge piece of toast into my mouth, "I ask your pardon, ma'am, but you said that a servant was to call for a young gentleman—are you sure it's for me?"

"Yes, my dear," replied she, taking a slip of paper from her pocket, "here's the name he left, and it's the same that's on your trunk and the way-bill,—'Master Penguin, per Plymouth Regulator, to be left till called for.'"

"Then, ma'am," answered I, "perhaps you can tell me what sort of a place I am going to, for Mr. Steers knew nothing about it."

"Lauk, didn't he!—to be sure, it isn't no wonder," rejoined the Wiltshire dame, tossing up her head; "for how should them stomach-

achy, cider-drinking people, down at Landsend in Devonshire, know anything of what's up in these civilised parts? Why, my dear, you are going to Mr. Birchell's, at Thistle'us Academy or young gentlemen, leastways I expect so; and it's quite a genteel school. Mr. Birchell, God bless his eye-sight, as the young gentlemen say, is as proud as our cock-turkey, because he married a relation of some lord, where he was tutor like, and he only takes in quality folks' sons. There isn't a more selecter school in the four counties: they learns everything. There's an old hemigrey French mounseer, what they say was a great lord over the water, with a piece of red ribbon pinned to his coat, and a long pig-tail and two powdered things turned up over his ears, like a brace of collyflowers—he teaches them French. And then there's another hemigrey, which plays on the fiddle, and teaches them dancing. People do say that he's courting the Miss Bobbins the haberdashers; but that's their business. Well, as I was a saying, we always send our best chays to carry the young gentlemen home for the holi-

days, and worse luck sometimes; for last Easter they took and cut my lord's eye out with their pea-shooters."

"What a pity, ma'am," said I; "and did they dare knock out a lord's eye?"

"O no! not a real lord's," answered mine hostess of the Dragon, "only crook'd-backed Bob's, our postillion; and, what was worse, Bob threw down the near wheeler, and my husband brought a haction against the young gentlemen's parents."

"For poor Bob's eye, ma'am?" demanded I.

"No, to be sure," retorted she, "that was Bob's look out;—no, for the mare's knees; for she warn't worth a ten-pound note after, and we'd refused six-and-thirty the day before. But lauk bless you my dear! them young gentlemen are as bad as old Nick when they get out of Mr. Birchell's sight, and don't care no more for words than the lawyers does at 'sizes." And again she returned to the bar, where, if her ale flowed as fast as her words, she was on the high-road to fortune.

So then, thought I, it is really true I am a

young gentleman, going to an academy for young gentlemen, where none but quality folks' sons are admitted, and where young gentlemen may knock out a post-boy's eye gratis, and only pay for broken-kneed horses. First, it struck me as an odd thing, that a hump-backed postillion should be called a lord; and then I thought of poor Penguin, and the Steers, and how rejoiced the latter would be to hear that I was so great a personage. And as they had bidden me write and tell them of my safe arrival, in the fulness of my heart I took the dirty inkstand from the mantle-piece, and commenced a letter upon half a sheet of paper that lay by it. I had got as far as "Honoured sir,—mayhap you will be glad to hear that the lady, who keeps the Green Dragon at Salisbury, tells me that I am a young gentleman,"—when my eye happened to fall upon my hand, and the sight of that rather damped my pride; not that it was large or misshapen; for I have since been complimented by our immortal bard, who told me, whatever my body might be, my fingers at least were "thorough-bred," and bore, as he has termed

it, that "distinctive mark of birth, the almost only sign of blood which aristocracy can generate;" but mine looked anything but aristocratic;—they were rough, chopped, freckled, and scaly: the palms were tinged with tar-stains, and the nails were in deep mourning, and bitten to the quick. It was an odd thing to strike me; but whether it was inspiration, or comparison with the young gentlemen's hands I had seen rowing, I thought my fingers were not like theirs; so I dropped the pen, crumpled up the letter, and ran to the pump in the yard, where, by dint of sand and yellow soap, I scrubbed them into a somewhat less dusky hue: it was my first essay at dandyism.

I was diligently occupied in drying my fingers on the stable-roller, and had determined to purchase a pair of gloves at the opposite hatter's, when an old gig entered the yard, in which was seated a servant in a dingy half-livery—a kind of personage between a tea-boy and a groom,—a sort of Jacknasty, usually to be found at schools. To my great satisfaction, his first exclamation to the ostler was, "Well, Bill, was

the young gentleman we expect from Devonshire dropped by Regulator?" Here was a further corroboration of my gentility; so I saved Bill the trouble of answering, by saying, "Yes, sir, here I am." After measuring me from head to foot, and smiling—why, I know not, unless it was because I called him "sir," the title by which I always addressed the servants from Oxover-hall—he told me he had a commission to buy marbles, lolly-pops, and tartlets for some of the young gentlemen, and that he would be back directly. I then returned into the house, and asked for my reckoning, upon which the landlady said, "O my dear, it's only eighteen pence, and sixpence for fire; but you've plenty to do with your pocket-money, and so I'll put down half-a-crown to Mr. Birchell's account, God bless his eye-sight; and no doubt he'll charge three shillings to your par and mar: but that's all in the way of business."

I thought this a very dishonest way of doing business: but as I concluded it was always the custom with young gentlemen, I made no reply, but followed my trunk into the gig; for Mr.

Steers told me he had travelled a good deal, and always made it a rule to stick by his luggage.

The servant having completed his purchases, and drunk his quart of ale, we started on the road to Thistle Hall, which was about eight miles off. My heart beat with anxiety and strange throbbings as we perceived the church-spire, which the servant told me was close to the academy. At length, a turn of the lane brought us in sight of the building itself, a large, old mansion, the property of a Catholic nobleman, whose family had carried him abroad at the peace of Amiens, and where he had continued to reside, having entered the Austrian service. My conductor had asked me several questions in a flippant manner during our drive; but he discovered from my replies, as I afterwards heard him tell my school-fellows, that I was "a rum kind of young gentleman," and subsided into silence, amusing himself by whistling, and lashing the haw-berries from the hedge-rows. However, when we began to ascend the hill which led round to the house, he checked his horse, and said, "I hope, sir, you'll

pay your footing; it's the custom with all the young gentlemen, and it's all the parquisites we gets."

The word "footing" reminded me of my first initiation into the workhouse, and I thought it a strange thing that young gentlemen should be submitted to the same exaction. But as I was afraid to compromise my gentility, I very reluctantly pulled out the half-crown Mr. Steers had given me. This he pocketed before I could ask him for change, for I only intended to present him with a shilling, and then, giving a queer turn with his eye, and thrusting his tongue into his cheek, as much as to say he had overreached me, he continued "Now, sir, as you've behaved very much like a gentleman, which I will tell all my feller-servants, and as you've never been at no school, and are the most greenhornedest young gentleman as ever came to our 'cademy, I'll put you up to a wrinkle or two. Himprimeous, as master says, and God bless his eye-sight, never you tell any tales out of school, because none of the young gentlemen never tells nothing: we never blows them, and

they never blows we. If so be they gets into a mess, such as robbing the garden, sucking eggs, getting out of bounds, or stealing small-beer, which is'nt easy, as missis keeps the key, though we sees it, we swears a halliby, and they swears black and blue nobody did it: we takes our Bible oaths, and they gives their words and honours, and such like. And then if master's rumgumscious, and says somebody must have done it, and nobody won't peach, then he flogs the whole school, and them as really did it gives us something for our trouble; only, now and then, when we can't abide a young gentleman, we says he did it, and though he's as innocent as the baby unborn, he catches it: that's exchange, which a'n't no robbery. Now, for instance, if you want apples, and as you be from Devonshire I suppose you are as fond of 'em as the Irish is of potatoes,—for we've four or five Irish rebel young gentlemen, and I believe they'd eat a field of potatoes, and drink a cow full of butter-milk, if master would let 'em,—so if you want apples, oranges, allicompane, penny tarts, or what not, I or my fellow-sarvant

goes into Salisbury twice a-week, and will bring you what you please, only mum's the word. Master, God bless his eye-sight, contracts with the pieman for buns, gooseberry tarts, and such like, and pays so much a-week, and charges the gentlefolk double, no doubt. Now, as he makes his profit, I don't see why we poor sarvants should not pick up a crumb likewise: what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Do you twig?"

"I have been always taught," replied I, "to speak the truth, and rather do anything than lie. It's a hard thing to be flogged for other boys' mischief: but as you say all the young gentlemen tell stories, I promise never to say a word about anything I hear or see."

"Now," continued the fellow, "I'll give you a crumb more advice. Mind you look sharp about missis; she's a bigger dragon than what's painted on the sign-post at Salisbury. You'd better have an apple-pie bed every night than ruffle her coat: she won't leave you a moment's peace; she's as stingy as a rushlight, and is always a boasting of her quality, though, after

all, she's only twentieth cousin to some lord; and though she won't stand our talking to the maids, she don't mind a bit of courting herself. Bless you, I caught her in master's study one evening a clacking her lips, for all the world like the pigman's whip, with Nibshort, the usher, who's the skinflintedest, mischievousest, devil-heartedest fellow in all Wiltshire. You must expect to be bullied a few at first; all new comers is; but mind you hold your own, and though you'll be flogged for fighting, dowse them as bullies you in the chops, only mind it a'n't my lord."

"Is he hump-backed, like Bob?" said I; "if so, it would be a shame to strike him."

"No, no! I means Lord Felix," answered he; "he's only crook-minded; but he's a favourite with missis, as is all the other quality."

By this time we had reached the back-door of the house, and I was ushered into the study, where I found Mr. and Mrs. Birchell hearing some boys their private lessons, a privilege purchased by an addition to the usual school charges, and a sort of premium for ignorance:

for I afterwards discovered, that these private pupils were what the footboy would have called the numskulledest of the whole school.

The reverend pedagogue and his wife were too much occupied at first to perceive me, so I had time to examine them both,—him, while he was measuring his pupils' verses, and she her store of tea and grocery, which, for greater security, she kept in a closet, painted on the outside in imitation of book-shelves, the big ones at bottom, and, *secundum artem*, the smaller ones at top. He was a little square-built man, with a vulgar, mean countenance, thick legs, and most pugnacious knees. Nature had been most bountiful in furnishing him with a mouth, the corners of which nearly reached a pair of ears as large almost as the dungeon of the Syracusian tyrant; but she had been singularly avaricious in regard to his nose. This organ could not have been detected upon his face, had it not been for two orifices, which opened a prospect into his head, and were only prevented making a complete junction, by a small neutral-tinted tubercle, having more the air of

a dyspeptic mushroom than the ordinary feature of the human visage. I now understood why the landlady and footboy blessed his eye-sight after the fashion of Joe Miller, for had he required the assistance of glasses, such an apology for a nose could not have prevented them from falling into his cavernous mouth.

As for Mrs. Birchell, I took an indescribable antipathy to her at first sight. I was of course utterly ignorant of the science of physiognomy, but there was a something about her gaunt figure, her protruding cheek-bones, her narrow pursy lips, pale lustreless eyes, and long pinchy nose, which bore the same proportion to that of her husband as the alpine *Jung-frau* to an apple-dumpling, that made me look upon her with incipient dread. Sympathies and presentiments are strange, inexplicable ingredients in the human system: sometimes deceptive, and sometimes leading one to fatal and unjust errors, but, for the most part, ratified by results. They may be considered as the almanacs of the soul, the mute shadows of approaching dispensations.

Mr. Birchell, who had been alternately scratch-

ing his head and the piece of paper before him with his pen, now turned to a clumsy-looking boy of about fourteen, and said,

"Very fair, Lord Felix, very fair! only thirteen false quantities, and about as many faults of grammar and construction in six lines. An essential improvement! The countess, your worthy mother, was justified in describing you as a boy of promise. All things have their season. *Odi puerculos præcoci ingenio*, they rarely turn out worth a straw. *Festina lentè* is my maxim. Your next exercise will be better. *Mala grammatica non vitiat chartam.* If you please, my lord, put that lolly-pop aside until I've corrected your verses. There," continued he, delivering over to his lordship the blotted lines, of which scarce a vestige of the original remained, "*Post prælia, præmia:* I love to encourage industry. As a stimulus to further exertion I excuse you evening school,

> Exigite ut mores teneros seu pollice ducat
> Ut si quis cerâ vultum facit,

as Juvenal says. Your's are the faults of an

elevated mind. I don't care a fig—will you reserve that dried one for two minutes?"

"O do, my dear young lord," exclaimed Mrs. Birchell in a shrill voice, "they are dreadful for the teeth."

But the fig was bolted, so the pedagogue continued: "I care not a fig for a few false quantities. I judge by quality, by the inspiration, the sacred fire which betrays the youth of genius. *Nec satis est pulchra esse poëmata*, as Ovid finely expresses it, *dulcia sunto*."

"You are quite right, Mr. B., quality is always preferable to quantity," observed the economico-aristocratic Mrs. Birchell, who was busied in the ingenuous occupation of weighing out a scanty portion of ultra brown sugar as a palliative to the heavy rice-dumplings which, alternately with dough-balls, formed the introduction to our dinners; Mrs. Birchell very generously telling us that the more pudding we ate the more meat we should have afterwards. "You are right, Mr. B.," continued the lady, picking up some of the sugar that had fallen; "you cannot expect people of birth to descend

to common minutiæ. Besides, although we do prepare boys for Eton and other public schools, between ourselves, I cannot comprehend the use of forcing them to become poets, *nolens volens*, as carpenters make shelves one under another, by rule and compass."

"My dear, if I might venture to observe," replied the husband, "such subjects are not within your province. I hold Latin versification to be essential to the knowledge of our own language, and to the education of every public man."

"What!" retorted the lady, "are public despatches written in sapphics or iambics? Does not the House of Peers speak prose?"

"Too often, my dear," rejoined the pedagogue.

"Does the House of Commons legislate in poetry? It is very well for Italian improvisatori to string rhymes together like the eyes in a peacock's tail, but really it seems very superfluous for future peers and senators to wear out the ends of their fingers during eight or ten years in scanning dactyls and spondees.

Lord Felix's mother told me she begged we would not think of cramping his lordship's genius with such trifles. 'The noble racer,' said she, 'cannot be expected to see pebbles.'"

"*Aquila non capit muscas*, eh?" exclaimed the husband.

"Very probably, Mr. B.," answered the lady: "only I wish you would not interrupt me, it is so tiresome." Lord Felix was of the same opinion, for he gave a terrible yawn, and then slily slipped the tabooed lolly-pop into his mouth. "Here," continued Mrs. Birchell, "I will read you a few lines, dated Newmarket, which I received this morning from Lady Raceinfield, with a cake for Lord Felix. 'I should wish to remind you,' says her ladyship, in her expressive style, 'that my dear Felix's lot is cast in a higher sphere. Remember, that although the thorough-bred horse may trip, he is not the less valuable—that we leave to cock-tails. He will enter for the king's plate, and at his first spring meeting will doubtless be the favourite, if he continues to grow up with as fine a forehand as at present. I hope great

attention is paid to his dancing, that is indeed important. I thought he did not step out so well last holidays. As for verses, I care no more for them than for a hunter's stakes. If he has a fair start he will not make a worse race because he shuts up at an hexameter. The Earl, his father, despises such nonsense as much as any man, and yet few get over the ground faster than he does. Indeed, the greatest minds have always disdained ordinary curbs, and have distanced all competitors by the mere force of condition."

"True, true, so far," exclaimed Mr. Birchell; "we find the image in Horace—

> Fingit equum tenerâ docilem cervice magister
> Ire viam quam monstrat eques."

Lord Felix now appeared much more anxious to eat his mamma's cake than to devour her precepts; so after fidgeting most painfully some time, he put his hand to his stomach and said, "Please, sir, I want to go out."

"Go, my lord, go!" replied the master; and away waddled his lordship, not, however, with-

out slily kicking my shin, as he passed, by way of introduction.

I had hitherto remained concealed by the group of boys who stood near the door, most of whom amused themselves by treading upon my feet, pinching my arms, sticking pieces of paper under my collar, and exhibiting other tokens of future good-fellowship.

As soon as they were dismissed, the footman exclaimed—"Here's the new young gentleman from Devonshire, sir;" upon which Mr. and Mrs. Birchell turned and bade me stand forward. And methought the latter eyed me with a look of peculiar disdain in return for the bow, or rather bob, with which I accompanied my movement.

"Well, Penguinedes, or *quod altro nomine gaudes*," said the schoolmaster, "so you are the mysterious youth whom I am to convert from a sow's ear into a silken purse, *ex scabies apes*, eh! Pray, may I ask *unde derivatur?*"

Seeing that I did not understand him, he added, "Where did you drop from?"

"From outside Plymouth Regulator, sir," rejoined I.

"From what part of Devonshire, I mean," resumed he. "I am pretty well versed in all the western patronymics, and although there are as many Pen-this and Pen-t'others in those parts as there are in a goose's wings, I never heard of any Penguins."

"I have searched Peerage, Baronetage, Court Guide, House of Commons' list, Road Book, and Travellers' Directory," exclaimed Mrs. Birchell, "but can find nothing like it. Pray who are the Penguins?"

"Why, ma'am," said I "poor James was a pilot and fisherman, well known in the chops of the channel, and for miles up and down the coast. When he was drowned, his widow was left badly off, and I should have remained upon parish if it had not been for lawyer Steers' goodness."

"There, Mr. B.," ejaculated the lady, "there, I told you how it would be. This comes of taking boys without references. I really cannot permit our establishment to be contaminated with such low persons. What would Lord and Lady Raceinfield, Lord Tory-

ville, and the other noblemen and gentlemen, say, if they discovered that their sons were the schoolfellows of parish paupers? So, you have sprung from the workhouse, and are the son of a common fisherman."

"No ma'am," answered I, "James Penguin was not my father."

"Then who, or what are your parents?" retorted Mrs. Birchell.

"That, ma'am, I cannot say; I was told that I was an orphan; but as the landlady at Salisbury talked of my father and mother being charged a shilling more for my breakfast than it cost, I hoped to hear something of them from you." Thereupon, at Mr. Birchell's bidding, I recounted all I knew of my history.

"Hem!" ejaculated the schoolmaster, "*ignotum per ignotius.* I am as much in the dark as ever."

"I can plainly see," said his wife, "that he is the natural son of some person who is ashamed to acknowledge him."

This was a sad blow to my expectations, but Mr. Birchell, notwithstanding his pedantry,

seemed to possess more good-nature than his wife; so he said, "Well, well, that is a sin for which he is not responsible, it is hard to visit the errors of parents upon children, though in conformity with the commandment. But I am bound to tell the boy all I know, and then we shall be quits." He then added, "I received, about a fortnight past, an anonymous letter inquiring if I would consent to take charge by the year of a boy of respectable family, named Peregrine Penguin, who had hitherto been much neglected, and offering to pay all charges in advance. My answer to be addressed to XX., No. 19, Lincoln's Inn, Old Square. Notwithstanding the mysterious and anomalous nature of the transaction, I consented, and received a second letter, enclosing the amount of my demand in bank notes, and announcing your arrival from Devonshire on this day. *Ecce iterum Crispinus*, here you are—and now, sir, pray what can you do?"

"Turn my hand to almost anything, sir," said I.

"To judge by its colour," exclaimed Mrs.

Birchell, "you seem to have turned it to almost anything but soap and water."

"*Nimium ne crede colori*, Mrs. B.," observed her husband. "That great Hellenist, Dr. Parr, is as proverbial for his indifference to the cares of the toilet as for his aversion to cheese; and the illustrious Porson esteems inward libations as a sufficient set-off against outward ablutions. But what books are you in, boy? Do you know anything of verses?"

"O yes, sir," replied I, "I have learned most of the psalms by heart, and I can sing a good merry song to the fiddle. But I've not had much time to read books."

"What have you read, eh?" returned he. "Delectus? Phædrus? Ovid? Horace? Cæsar? Virgil? Cornelius Nepos? Homer, or Greek Testament?"

He might as well have asked if I understood the Mysteries of Zoroaster, so I replied in the negative. Thereupon he shrugged up his shoulders, and desired me to deliver my trunk to the housekeeper and my body to the usher. Then, by way of encouraging my zeal for learning, he said he had

no doubt he should be able to whip the whole Gradus ad Parnassum and Greek Lexicon into me in the course of a few months. "And mind," added he, "none of your monkey tricks here. No turnip pranks, unless you root up a whole field and feed your sheep's head upon them; then they will be titheable. I allow a first fault. After that *cave! ne titubes mandataque frangas*, or you will find Birchem-grove quickly arrive at Dunce-nane. I have a very pretty method of illustrating classical obscurities with woodcuts. Hem! you may go."

Mrs. Birchell now bade me follow her to the housekeeper's room, where she deposited her stores, and I my box. She then summoned the usher. The first glances exchanged between the latter and myself seemed to determine our mutual sentiments for the future. Mine of dread and antipathy—his of injustice and barbarity.

"Here, Mr. Nibshort," said Mrs. Birchell, "here is this Devonshire boy. You will scarcely credit the scrape we have got into owing to Mr. B.'s imprudence. He comes direct from

the workhouse—his guardian a fisherman, his patron some low attorney. I am resolved, however, that our establishment shall not long be contaminated with such a black sheep. You will therefore keep a constant eye upon him."

"Providing you are not present," replied the hypocrite bowing, and screwing his sullen, mean features into a vile smirk—a compliment to which she responded with a languishing simper. "Under your good auspices," continued he, "I hope to succeed in purifying the Augean stable, or to assist your views in sending him back whence he came. I fully participate in your indignation at being condemned to harbour a parish pauper. But leave him to me, I'll look to him."

"My confidence in you is unbounded," replied the lady significantly, "and therefore, although it is Mr. B's rule not to allow any one to beat or flog the boys but himself, you have my permission to exercise your discretion upon this one."

Mr. Nibshort placed his hand on his heart,

and lifted up his eyes as if in tender thanksgiving—I cast my eyes down in sorrowful foreboding.

A bell now rang. I was told it was for dinner, and the usher bade me follow and place myself by his side at table.

CHAPTER VII.

The Thracians esteemed horse-flesh as an infallible recipe for inuring their youth to war—Mr. Birchell opines that mutton is the best diet for incipient chancellors—I am condemned to durance for losing my appetite, and caned for finding a friend—I fall out with one boy, and fall in with the French master, who gives me friendly advice—I am beaten for recovering my appetite, and sent supperless to bed to avert night-mare—I invent a very successful hydraulic instrument, and am rewarded for my ingenuity—Home, sweet home!

Although my stomach was empty, my heart was too full to eat. Indeed, though nothing of an epicure, my throat absolutely rose at the mess of jaundiced and soddened rice which was placed before me, as a prelude to the tough, fat slices of half-boiled mutton, which were to be its succes-

sors. Mr. Birchell, who had been educated on the Eton foundation, not only adhered to the Eton system of instruction with all its imperfections and prejudicial omissions, but even adopted the uniform diet which has acquired for the king's scholars the generic appellation of "tug-muttons." Consequently no other meat than mutton was allowed at his table. A lanigerous aliment, as he facetiously observed, admirably adapted to qualify them for the woolsack.

My want of appetite did not escape Nibshort's observation, who first rapped my finger with his fork and said, "Come, sir, none of your airs here. Do your Devonshire paupers turn up their noses at such excellent viands as these? Eat, sir, eat, I say—eat, or go to the penitentiary, you will be at home there,"—and he pointed to a couple of steps in the corner, which I soon ascertained was the flogging-block, but which also served as a sort of pillory, where minor delinquents expiated their offences by exposure during dinner or school-time. It was in vain that I endeavoured to obey: the clammy mess literally stuck in my throat. So, to prevent un-

pleasant results, I abandoned the effort, saying, "Sir, if you please, I cannot—I am not hungry."

"Eat," replied he, "or I'll report you."

"If I do I shall turn sick," retorted I, making another effort. The only answer I received was a box on the ear, with an order to march, and mount the penitentiary.

Mr. Birchell was too much occupied in devouring his own dinner to observe what was passing at the bottom of the table; but he no sooner discovered my disgrace, and learned the cause, than he exclaimed, "What, dainty forsooth? *Lepus tute es, et pulpamentum quæris?* And insolent to boot! A fine commencement, Mr. Penguinedes—but come, sir, descend from your high estate; it is your first fault. Henceforth *cave*, or your knees will occupy the place where your heels are."

I had scarcely time to slink back and cast a timid glance at the two rows of giggling boys who lined the table, where they were placed according to titular rank and precedence, not according to age or merit, when Mr. Birchell, rose, uttered a short grace, and the juvenile band rushed to the

play-ground, some to cast away the lumps of rice and fat which they had secreted about their clothes, but the greater part to surround me.

This they did like a swarm of wasps. Questions of "What's your name?"—"what school have you been at?"—"how much money, and what cakes, have you brought?" were re-echoed by twenty voices. The ingenuous nature of my answers, together with the report made of my "greenhornedness," by the foot-boy, seemed to have marked me as a fit object for more than the ordinary torments to which novices are generally doomed. So they forthwith commenced every kind of trick which juvenile ingenuity could invent. Amongst the foremost of my persecutors was Lord Felix, with five or six other boys much bigger than myself: one of these tripped up my heels; another squirted muddy water in my face; a third stuck a lolly-pop paper in my ear; and a fourth running away with my hat, jerked it into the duck-pond! whilst a bevy of small fry pinioned my arms, and, before I could extricate myself, Lord Felix forced some detestable filth into my mouth, which he called Thistle-house dessert.

Three or four boys stood aloof and seemed to commiserate me, and one of them so far interceded in my behalf as to exclaim, "It is a shame, it is too bad! Springwood, you would not dare to touch him if he was bigger." Unfortunately my advocate was not a match for any of the others. He was a fair, blue-eyed, delicate boy, of gentle and amiable appearance, and about my own age. From his being placed upon the left hand of Mrs. Birchell, and being favoured with a glass of wine after dinner, he was evidently of some rank, but I did not know until afterwards, that he was the Hon. William Pitt Toryville, only son of one of the noblemen whom Mr. Birchell had spoken of as likely to be offended at his son's herding with me.

"It is an abominable shame, you bullies!" again exclaimed the fair boy, as the others continued their persecution, "and if it were not mean I would tell Birchell, and have you punished. None but cowards would behave as you do."

"Cowards! do you mean to call me a coward?"

exclaimed Lord Felix, quitting me and marching up to my defender. Take that, sir!"—and he gave him a violent blow which brought blood from his nose.

I had hitherto supported my own torments without murmuring, but the sight of the blood of the kind boy, who had sought to defend me, roused my mettle. Shaking off the youngsters who clung to my arms, I sprang forward, and then throwing off my jacket, exclaimed, "If you are not a coward, stand up like a man, and you shall get Devonshire dessert." Thereupon I set to work, and gave him such a drubbing as soon made him roar out for mercy. Having had enough, he sneaked off with some of his friends, and as no one interposed in his favour, I was allowed to put on my jacket in peace. The boy whom I had avenged now came up, thanked me, and offering me his hand said, "You and I will henceforth be cronies. I am but a poor weak thing, or Springwood would not have required chastisement at your hands. He's the greatest lout, tyrant, and story-teller in the school. I am glad you have given him a lesson,

especially as it will inspire the rest of his set with respect; but I fear your victory will cost you dear, for he is sure to tell Mrs. Birchell, and you will be severely punished, especially as she told us that you had neither father nor friends—see," added he, "here she comes with Nibshort."

In another minute the usher was at my side, and without further preface commenced beating me with his cane, being encouraged the while by Mrs. Birchell. After amusing himself in this way until he was tired, by way of prelude, he delivered me over to Mr. Birchell in order that he might execute the finale. Although the latter took as much delight in flagellation as sportsmen do in beating covers, he seemed inclined at first to think me not so much to blame as Lord Felix. But even had his lordship's black eye and swollen cheek not risen in judgment against me, Mrs. Birchell's mandate would have sufficed to turn the scale; for she declared that, "cost what it might, she would write to Lord and Lady Raceinfield and recommend them to remove their son, if the dear,

injured boy was allowed to be mutilated and disfigured by a low-born cur from a Devonshire workhouse." This was an irresistible argument, especially when backed by symptoms of an hysteric. Therefore, as soon as the school-bell rang, Mr. Birchell tucked up his sleeves, opened the cupboard containing the rods, which, as he boasted, were made exactly to a twig after the Eton model, the block was pulled forth, and I was directed to commence what the French term, "the condemned toilet."

I had been beaten with rope's end, whips and sticks—often beaten for various pranks—yet this was the first time I had ever been subjected to, or even witnessed, the ignominious and disgusting chastisement adopted at the most renowned English schools, as the most appropriate system of correction "for young gentlemen;" thus apparently establishing it as the exclusive privilege of the higher classes. Remonstrance or opposition were, of course, vain. But young as I was, and illiterate and neglected as I had been, my heart swelled with indignation at being obliged to submit to so degrading a process. I

could not conceive how any member of the church, how any decent-minded man could advocate, still less consent to be the instrument of, such an infamous mode of castigation, or how any parent could send his son to a place of education where it was not only applied indiscriminately, but adhered to by the masters as essential to the maintenance of subordination and the progress of letters. However, down I knelt, and bore the sting with more fortitude than the unseemly witticisms of Mr. Birchell, who, mistaking the gloom of my countenance for the forerunner of a flood of tears, exclaimed, "No crying before you are out of the wood;" then accompanying his blows with the sort of noise made by Irish paviours, he wound up with, "There, *Intus et in cute novi*, or as Dryden turned it, without ever dreaming of the application,

> "I know thee to the bottom,—from within
> Thy shallow centre, to thy utmost skin."

I would sooner have bitten off my tongue, than have betrayed any other emotion than that of indignation, both at the punishment and cause;

but my firmness seemed to operate very differently upon the master and pupils: the former gave me four or five cuts more, because he considered my behaviour not only as a proof of a hardened heart, but of a very tough epidermis; whilst, the latter, when school was over, crowded round me, saying they had all been tickled up twenty times, and did not care a straw for it, for they would sooner have two floggings than one extra lesson; but, although I was a spunky fellow for not piping, I was wrong, nevertheless, for not crying like a stuck pig. "You will see," observed one of them, "none of us ever receive a single cut without bellowing like bulls of Bashan. Not that it hurts much—but old Birchy always calculates the amount of our penitence by the loudness of our lamentations. So the moment he opens what he calls his printing press, we commence singing out as if we already suffered the martyrdom of St. Bartholomew."

I thanked my new acquaintance for his information, but said, that however much the pain might annoy me, I would not give Mr. Birchell

the triumph of knowing it, especially when I was unjustly punished, which had been the case twice within the lapse of as many hours. Indeed, the reader will not marvel if I now strongly doubted the correctness of Mr. Steers' parting observation — "that school was the happiest period of man's life;" for no sooner did I arrive, than I was kicked, pinched, and spat upon, by way of introduction: I was then told that my society would disgrace the establishment; I was next beaten, and publicly exposed for not gorging myself with boiled rice; in a few minutes after, I was tormented for no other reason than that I was a new-comer, and had no friends; and then, because I bore my own indignities without complaining, and merely stood forward to defend a weak boy, I was most unmercifully caned, and then submitted to the disgraceful punishment, which, in the innocency of my plebeian heart, I thought was reserved for cart-tail vagrants, and petty thieves—a punishment from which I should have arisen with as much shame as disgust, had I not found that it was laughed at by the other young noblemen and

gentlemen, who neither quailed at the pain, nor blushed at the exposure.

My young friend, Toryville, having been obliged to lie down, in consequence of the blow he had received from my antagonist, and the other boys having little inclination to renew their attacks upon me after the specimen I had given of my prowess, I was left alone, and was glad to escape into the little wood, a part of which was included within our bounds. There I walked,

"And wept, I knew not why, until there rose,
From the near school-room, voices, that, alas!
Were but one echo from a world of woes—
The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes."*

* Dedication to Shelley's "Revolt of Islam." The above lines evidently allude to Shelley's sufferings when at Eton, where, to use the cant phrase, he was "properly bullied" from morning to night. The eccentricities of his character were looked upon by his school-fellows, and indeed by the masters, as symptoms of madness. "Mad Shelley," was his general nickname, at the very moment when his exercises and verses gave ample token of that eminent poetical genius which afterwards illustrated his name. It was a common practice with the boys to way-lay, chase

Thinking these noises might be some new vexation in store for me, I plunged further into the wood, and opened the Eton Latin grammar, which Nibshort had put into my hands, though I looked upon its contents with as much wonder as I should have done upon the lion in the frontispiece, had he jumped over his parterre of fleurs de lys, and saluted me with a growl. I was hard at work upon the liquids, diphthongs, declensions, and other initiatory mysteries, when I heard footsteps, and perceived the old emigré, whose ungrateful duty it was to teach the boys French.

Never having seen a native of that country, I was naturally curious to examine his person; and although his costume might have been somewhat eccentric, I thought there was nothing in his appearance to justify the vulgar prejudice of one Englishman being a match for three Frenchmen. He was a spare but sinewy man, above

and pelt him, after school, with mud or oranges. Aware of this, he would start home to his dame's with the speed of a deer, followed by many as swift as himself. This was called a "Shelley hunt."

the ordinary height, and apparently about fifty years of age. His features were prominent, his forehead lofty, his eye bright and intelligent, and he had an expression of gaiety and good-humour in his countenance, which neither the furrows of time nor the more destructive inroads of misfortune had been able to extinguish. He walked erect, and with the dignity and noble carriage of one accustomed to command. His dress consisted of a loose wrapper or greatcoat of reddish grey cloth, the skirts of which hung down to his ancles; beneath were a pair of black satin breeches, blue-striped silk stockings, and shoes ornamented with large buckles; a ribbon was ostentatiously pinned through his button-hole: as he carried his three-cornered hat under his arm, it left unsullied the carefully-curled "pigeons'-wing" wig and long cue, the powder from which gave his back the appearance of that of a miller's: he was, in short, the fac-simile of some of those shadows of the olden time, who may still be seen basking in the sunny walks of the Tuileries, or threading their way through the lustreless streets of the

Fauxbourg St. Germain: decaying mementos of that awful convulsion, which produced such fearful results to their country and to all Europe, as remain unparalleled by the past, and, it is to be hoped, will continue unrivalled by the future annals of nations.

As the old gentleman approached, I took off my hat: he bowed, and gave a flourish with his gold-headed cane, which, from the treatment I had hitherto met with, I thought he intended to let fall upon my head; so I screwed up my shoulders, and patiently awaited the blow: upon this he smiled, and holding out his hand, he said, "N'ayez pas peur, mon enfant! Not steek. Dat should be an introduction à l'Irlandaise; he meet wid his friend, and for loaf knock 'im doon, as your chanson say. No, no! a true Frenchman never maltraite innocent little shild;" and then, poor gentleman, he sighed heavily. I was proceeding farther, but he stopped me, exclaiming, "Ah, ah! vat you go! Look,—eef you will more flog, you turn dat vay—eef you no flog, you turn dis way. You out of bons. Mort Dieu! you English bo-ys

not like French bo-ys; you have diable au corps, I tink. You mock at bons; you mock at flog; you like les Anguilles; you loaf to be skeen, as dee cook say. Ah, ah! par bleu, talk of cook, no vonder you seek at mouton wid blood sauce; mouton pardi,—all day, mouton. Ah! I seek myself, I tink I become a sheep. Peste! I say with Barbé-Marbois,

> Sacré gigot, sujet de nos débats steriles,
> Jusqu'ou ravalez-vous nos estomachs debiles!*

As Madame de Sévigny says, let us return to our moutons. If she live at Tissel-hose, she be glad to ron avay from her moutons; but que diable! I see you mock at rods dis after dinner as if you have skeen of rhinoceros and heart of lion. I stody Lavater, as also Mr. Beershall, chacun apres sa manière. He stody physiognimy in bo-ys tails; I stody on more grateful side: I see you cry littel and fight much; oder

* See Journal of M. Barbé-Marbois, who, with Pichegrue and others, were transported to Guinea by order of the Directory in 1797. The leg of mutton, which gave rise to the above two lines, is eloquently spoken of by the unfortunate proscript.

bo-y cry much, fight littel,—I tink you brave and genereux; that diablesse, Madame Beershall, tink you bad: she know not more of human nature dan gastronomy. I tell her read almanack des gourmands, and she learn make cotelettes and sauces; but she green at me, and say, 'English fight for king and country for five hundred years widout sauce;' ah! as if Magna Charta was made of boil mouton, and dee constitution of ross-bif." Then he added, mournfully, "Helas! when I see you flog, I tink of my own poor littel grandson; dey cut off his head, because he not trahir his old grandpapa; and he, like you, no cry,—'Ed egli non piangeva,' as Count Ugolino say;—no; he bear blows, hunger, prisons, and only weep for his mama. Helas! they cut her off too. Ah, mon Dieu! ma pauvre fille! mes pauvres enfants! But I should not complain, when I see dee poor king die, dee innocent queen die, and the barbares keel the littel Dauphin."

I will not, however, continue to cast ridicule upon the good old gentleman's sentiments by caricaturing his broken English; nor will I avail

myself of the favourable opportunity of showing off my scanty knowledge of French by interlarding my memoirs with scraps of that language. The reader must, therefore, forgive me if I avoid the example of fashionable novelists, and do my best to give the Count de Florennes' words in homely English.

"Come," said he to me, after we had proceeded a few yards, "come, I am a poor exiled old man; the afflictions I have endured are enough to steel my heart against all mankind, but I can still feel for those who are the victims of oppression." Then, as if he were addressing a person of mature age, he continued, "Alas! how little we emigrés are known—how erroneously judged! Because we have remained faithful to our God, our laws, and our king, we are branded as traitors and tyrants. My whole life has been devoted to the honour and glory of my dear country; and I abhor tyranny, no matter under what shape it appear, more sincerely, perhaps, than many who wear the blood-stained cap of liberty. When in prosperity and power, I raised my voice against the oppression

of the government; but my warnings were rejected, and I was repaid with frowns: it is a dangerous thing to counsel princes. When power changed hands, and that of the crown was as a grain of sand to the bloody tyranny of the people, I left my retreat, and again opposed it; but, alas! it is more dangerous to oppose the will of the people than that of kings: for here I am, a proscribed outcast, my children murdered, the very materials of my château sold by the black band, my name, illustrious through twenty generations, about to be extinguished in my own frail person, and from having been the dispenser of happiness and prosperity to hundreds, I am reduced to gain a pitiful existence as teacher to the wild youths, who now deride and despise the poor, broken-down emigré."

"O sir," said I, taking courage, and respectfully pressing the old nobleman's hand, "if you will be kind enough to give me lessons, I will be attentive, and do my best to repay you for your trouble. I am not above doing anything, sir, and will wait upon you as if you were my father: though I am but a poor friend-

less orphan, I will do all I can to console you."

Monsieur de Florennes cordially returned the pressure of my hand, and whilst his eye glistened with a tear, he exclaimed, "Brave child! I thank you. The outpourings of your innocent heart are a balm to my sorrows; but, alas! nothing can console me in this world but the hopes of another and a better: for that I am prepared, fully prepared; yes, miserable and unfortunate as I am, my end will not be like that of your celebrated Wolsey; I shall meet it without regret or remorse: for I have injured no man; and though I have faithfully served my king, I have never for a moment neglected my God—he will not desert me in my last extremity." Here he crossed himself devoutly, and then continued, "You and I must, however, be better friends; your conduct this day has won my heart: besides, you bear a remarkable resemblance to a worthy Irishman, who, though a proscript like myself, befriended me when I was pursued by my enemies in France, and, at the peril of his own existence, saved mine.

In the meantime, we can mutually assist each other; you in aiding me to wile away the many hours of tedious solitude, I in advancing your knowledge of that language, which is too much neglected in all your schools; for, although a perfect acquaintance with French is not only essential for the education of a gentleman, and although men of all other countries are considered illiterate if they are not able to express themselves correctly, it is of rare occurrence to meet an Englishman who can utter even a few sentences without committing faults which render the finest arguments ridiculous, and which give other nations an immense advantage over you, at all events, in all oral communications. Solely intent upon learning Greek and Latin, you waste the precious years of youth in poring over the dead languages, which you acquire imperfectly, and for the most part forget as soon as acquired, whilst you neglect other essentials that are requisite for your advancement in life, whether as diplomatists, soldiers, statesmen, and especially as accomplished men of the world: but more of this hereafter.

I have interrupted your studies. Go, and if the advice of an old man be worth accepting, come to me when you are in need, and I will assist you: in the meantime be diligent and obedient. I have some experience and insight into character, and fear that your independent spirit will lead you into many scrapes, and cause you to make many enemies. Curb this sentiment, which, however laudable at a more advanced age, does not become youth, and is too often destructive in manhood."

It was fortunate, perhaps, that we were now within bounds, for a turn of the walk brought us before Nibshort, who exclaimed, "What are you doing, idling there, sir?—go into the school, and take care you know your lesson: as for you, Mr. Florennes, I must beg you will not interfere with the boys of my class, except at the proper hour. Remember, you are no longer in France, sir."

"Alas! no one makes me feel it more than you, sir," replied the other, as, shaking me by the hand, he turned round, and continued his walk.

I now followed the usher into the house, but with a lighter heart, for I had at all events found one person, who felt disposed to treat me like a rational being.

Having an unusually retentive memory, I was enabled to get through my first essay in the Latin grammar without bringing myself into trouble, unless, indeed, Nibshort had beaten me for learning too fast. The hour for supper at length arrived, and I was delighted to think that, in a few minutes, my day's persecutions would terminate. What with travelling all night, and being worried all day, I was so worn out, that I fell asleep in a corner, and snored away lustily, in despite of being tickled in the nose with feathers. But I had yet another ordeal to go through: nothing that I did could escape the lynx-eye of Nibshort; for he no sooner saw that I heartily devoured the thinly-buttered slices of bread, which, with little milk and much water, formed our evening meal, than he exclaimed, "So, you jackanapes, you can eat now, can you? I thought we should cure your daintiness; but this won't do, sir, beggars

must not be choosers. Here, John, take away Penguin's plate, let him wait until to-morrow, he will sleep the sounder." I was about to remonstrate, and seize upon the half-finished slice, when I caught the bright eye of M. de Florennes, who was standing opposite. His brows were knit, as if to invite to obedience. So, although I was no less angry than hungry, I submitted in silence. But even this could not secure me from Nibshort's spite; for he gave me such a tap on the head with his knuckle, as had nigh brought the milk as well as water into my eyes, saying, "You will make faces, will you? I have a great mind to send you again to the penitentiary." At length, thank God, Mr. Birchell read prayers, and we were dismissed to our respective dormitories.

Overwhelmed with fatigue and bruises, I threw myself into bed, and regardless of clipped horse-hair, peppered pillow, apple-pie, and other tricks, slept until I was aroused by a sharp twitch at my toe, which in an instant I found to proceed from a string pulled by some other boy. I bore one or two tugs quietly, but

being resolved to revenge myself, I slipped my hand down, and, unloosening the noose, fastened it to the bed-post. In a few minutes, I crept stealthily out, and, taking the ball of packthread from my pocket which had been given me by Miss Steers, I spliced two long ends to the middle of the string, one of which I connected with the bell-rope, and the other to a large tin pitcher of water that stood upon a shelf near the head of Lord Felix's bed, whom I justly suspected of being my tormenter. It being pitch dark, I slunk back unperceived, unloosened the string from the bed-post, and pretended to snore, in hopes that the attempt upon my foot would be renewed. In a few minutes, my scheme of vengeance fully succeeded. I had the satisfaction not only to hear a loud ring at the bell, which hung in the passage, and was connected with all the rooms, as a sort of alarum, but a piercing scream from the terrified Lord Felix announced the fall of the tin pitcher, which, after giving him a shower bath, rolled upon the floor.

Attracted by the outcries of the young lord

and the noise of the bell, the whole house was soon in motion, and in a few seconds Mr. and Mrs. Birchell, Nibshort, and the fat housekeeper, followed by M. de Florennes, entered the room with lights, where of course they found every one pretending to be fast asleep, excepting the involuntary cause of his own misfortune, who sat shivering, crying, and drenched to the skin. I opened one eye cautiously, and it had been better to have kept it shut, for the sight of Lord Felix's pitiful figure, with that of Mrs. Birchell and the housekeeper in their night dresses, and M. de Florennes in a cap like the patient in the "Malade Imaginaire," got the better of my prudence, and, in despite of all my efforts, I fell to laughing so loudly that it attracted the attention of the whole group.

"You impudent, unfeeling wretch!" exclaimed Mrs. Birchell, lifting up her candle! "it is evident *you* did it," and without further preface she flew at me, seized my shoes, and, saving your presence, reader, threw off the coverlid and commenced playing upon my bare

back, as if she had been kettle-drummer to the Royal Horse Guard's Blue. When she had exhausted her strength, she at length bethought herself of asking me if I was the real culprit; for M. de Florennes, who had been examining the *corpus delicti*, now exclaimed, "Ah! ah! die faux is caught in his own trap—he tread on his own noses his ownselfs—look;" and he then showed the end of the string tied under Lord Felix's pillow. This circumstantial evidence was strongly in my favour, although his lordship roared out, "It was not me, upon my honour—O you old French brute!"

Upon this Mr. Birchell said, "Very well, I will soon find out, and if the offender will not confess I will flog the whole room, except Lord Felix, who is sufficiently punished. I now recollected what the footboy had told me, and determined to pay off the rest of the boys for their tricks. So when the pedagogue came round to all our beds successively, and asked us to declare, "upon our words and honours," whether we were guilty, and the boys denied all participation, Heaven forgive me for it, I fol-

lowed their example. "O! so nobody did it?" exclaimed Mr. Birchell. "Well, then, to-morrow morning I'll flog the whole of you, and there can be no mistake." And so saying he retired, followed by the rest.

When they were gone I sat up in bed and said, "I think it a very hard thing for all of us to be punished because that lubberly lord was stupid enough to give himself a ducking: besides, as he is to be pardoned, he might as well tell the truth, and say at once he did it;" an opinion in which I was supported by all my companions. But this made his lordship the more obstinate, and he merely replied, "No, that's the very reason I would not say I did it, even if I had, for I shall have the pleasure of seeing you all tickled up; but do you think I am such a fool as to pull down the water on my own head?"

"I think you are fool enough for anything," rejoined I, "and if you don't like that I will give you a second dose of the same sauce you had yesterday. Mr. Birchell may forgive your false quantities in favour of your quality, but I

will not suffer for your falsehoods, though you were 'Squire Oxover"

Silence at length reigned in our chamber, and I slept until daylight, when I was awakened by a buzz of voices, and lifting up my eyes, saw several of the boys seated undressed upon the marble hearth, making horrid faces from the cold. I thought this a strange way of commencing the day, and asked one of them what they were doing.

" O," said he, " as we are to be flogged in an hour's time, we are merely petrifying for old Birchy, who, no doubt, will be as good as his word."

And so he was. At eight o'clock he made his appearance in the school-room, and as the whole of us persisted in proclaiming our innocence, he opened the ominous press, and duly printed on our individuals a stereotype memorandum of the night's adventure, with the especial favour of an appendix to my copy.

But I will not longer fatigue the reader with the vexations and minutiæ of an existence to which I at length became somewhat more recon-

ciled. The vigour I had shown upon my first introduction, my agility and powers of mimicry, though the latter made me more enemies than friends, secured me from the attacks of all but four or five stronger boys, who were very ingenious in their mode of tormenting me, when it suited their fancy, but reserved this diversion as their own exclusive privilege.

The zeal and application with which I attended to my studies, though it could not guarantee me from Nibshort's cane, wrought a considerable change in my favour with his superior, who now and then went so far as to excuse me, when I was condemned to the rod by his usher. He, moreover, permitted me to pass as much of my spare time as I pleased with the old Count; with whom I commenced making a rapid progress in French, besides availing myself of his instructions in music: for, seeing that I had a decided taste for it, he urged me to apply myself earnestly to the violin, on which he played with consummate skill and execution, so that in a short time I

obtained considerable knowledge of a science, which, however frivolous and dangerous when carried to excess, has afforded me greater consolation and resource under misfortunes than any other acquirement. It was the cause of my being called Mol-coddle and spooney by most of my school-fellows, but I cared not for that, particularly as William Toryville, between whom and myself there sprang up the warmest friendship, was equally fond of the art.

Thus time rolled on, bringing with it little variety or change, until the approach of the summer holidays.

A month before the appointed time, the boys commenced calculating the number of days that separated them from their beloved homes. Some procured sticks upon which, like Robinson Crusoe, they notched the days of their captivity; but in lieu of adding to the number, each night saw one effaced, amidst divers joyful exclamations. Others, when they retired to bed, sat up and chatted of the happiness in store for them. Some boasted they should have no lessons; some said they were going to

the sea-side or lakes; some spoke of the dear old mansions of their ancestors, and talked in affectionate raptures of their relations, of the fat pony taken up from grass, of the old and faithful servants who had nursed and loved them as their own children, and of the no less faithful dogs that would greet their arrival with a thousand gambols. Then giggling with the thought, they sank to sleep and happy dreams.

My young friend, Toryville, was not the last who gladly anticipated the vacations. He spoke of his noble father, whom he described as a man of formal manners and decided opinions in politics, but benevolent and kind withal to him and his sister, whom he loved with more than common fraternal affection, and portrayed as a beautiful and interesting creature.

"I adore her," said William, "she is so good, so clever, and though I fear my father, I love him tenderly: but between you and me, it is otherwise with my mother. I fear, but do not love her. Besides, she is not my mother. Delphine and I lost ours when we were infants. Lady Toryville is my father's second wife. She

has no children of her own, and dislikes those of others, and as she has great influence with my father, Delphine and I are in some degree the sufferers."

He then asked me where I was to go for the vacation — a question to which I could only reply by saying, that I awaited to hear from Mr. Steers, to whom I had written an account of all that had passed, but had received no reply.

"I dare say your letters never reached him," replied he, "for Mrs. Birchell reads all those written by, or addressed to, the boys. It is not likely, therefore, she would allow yours to be sent if you spoke the truth."

I thought this very cruel, but nevertheless I wrote again, and gave my epistle to Mr. Birchell, who put an end to my doubts and expectations by saying, "*Aut insanit puer? aut versus facit.* Why, I thought, Mr. Penguinedes, I had explained to you, *literatim et verbatim*, that you were to remain the whole year at school, and that an extra payment had been made on that account by your friend XX. You

must, therefore, not expect *salus à cruce* this holidays, but make up your mind to remain here with M. de Florennes and Nibshort, whilst I and Mrs. Birchell pay a visit to Ramsgate, where, over an excellent breakfast of prawns and other testacei, we rejoice to look out upon the troubled waters. We were fortunate last year," added he, rubbing his hands, "to see three or four very fine shipwrecks. To a classical mind, to a lover of the sublime, there is nothing equal to the beauty of the ocean during a tempest,

> Suave, mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis
> E terrâ magnum alteris spectare laborem.

Hem! you may go."

At length the day, pregnant with joy to all but me, arrived. The last notch from the holyday sticks was cut away, rendering them as smooth as Birchell's face. Indeed, there was a sort of traditional joke amongst the boys, that the pedagogue had used his own nose for a similar purpose when at Eton, which thus accounted for the sort of bluish grey stump that

stuck up there like a grave-stone, to mark the burial place of the rest. Already the whole house was in a bustle. Songs of *dulce domum* and *Io Pœan* re-echoed from without. Noises of packing, tearing up old exercises and books, and breaking old playthings, were heard within. Dressed before daylight, some of the boys ran screaming and jumping in expectation of the vehicles that were to convey them home: whilst others, in feverish anxiety, watched the road, and fancied that time stood still because the clock did not keep pace with their impatience.

Lord Toryville having announced his intention to call for his son, as he returned from a political visit to a nobleman of his party near Salisbury, William and I went as far as the boundary-gate to await his arrival. As we sat upon the stile waving our hands to the merry boys who departed in succession, my friend spoke much to me of his family.

"I have often mentioned your name to my father," said he, "and as you are not going home for the holydays, I have asked his permission for you to pass them with us, but as

Lady Toryville dislikes children, I am not too sanguine."

I could only press his hand and express my thanks for his kindness to me, so far beneath him in station; for, although I resolved to conduct myself as much as possible like a young gentleman, my idea of being one in reality had nearly vanished.

"O do not talk in that way, Peregrine," answered he, "I think you more gentlemanly than almost any other boy in the school. Besides, if you are not so by birth, what does that signify? I have often heard my father boast that his great ancestor, who was Lord Chancellor in the time of the Stuarts, was the son of a brazier, and gained his fortune and honours by his talents and integrity. Although my father is a great courtier and a determined Tory, he says the path of honour is open to all men; and he has told me, that if I merely relied upon my future title, and estates, to bear me through the world, that I should become a useless member of society, and perhaps bring discredit upon my name and family. I am sure,

if you come to the castle, my father will like you for my sake and for your own worth. You will have plenty of fiddles to play upon; he is a good judge of music, and Delphine is looked upon as a great proficient on the piano."

I again thanked my young protector, and my heart began to beat violently when he clapped his hands, and exclaimed, "There he is, there he is! I see the sun glittering upon the chariot windows and the white liveries." And so saying he ran back to the house to await his parent.

I followed, but stood at a distance, for Mrs. Birchell drove me away, desiring me not to stand gaping at the door like a beggar waiting for half-pence. In a few minutes the Viscount's chariot and four arrived, the door was opened, and William sprang into his father's arms. What would I not have given to have been in William's place as I saw Lord Toryville put his hand round his boy's waist, kiss him, look at him with tender, noble satisfaction, and walk with him into the house, followed by Mr. and Mrs. Birchell, who bowed and curtsied like the

plaster Mandarins upon the parlour chimney. I turned away to give vent to my emotion, but ere many minutes, was summoned to the study, when I entered with a beating heart, and had scarcely courage to meet the peer's eye. I was emboldened, however, by my friend, who took my hand and said, "Here he is, father; I am sure you will be kind to him for his kindness to me. O! it would have done your heart good to see the thrashing he gave to Springwood." Mrs. Birchell pursed up her thin lips and clenched her bony fingers; but she affected to smile, and exclaimed, "Boys will be boys, you know, my lord: dear Lord Felix has very high spirits, and is a little hasty. He was very wrong—exceeding wrong for striking your dear child: and if he had not been so shockingly beaten by that boy, Mr. Birchell would have punished him severely."

"Undoubtedly," responded her husband.

"I beg your pardon, sir," replied William, "I do not think he would have been punished, for I should not have complained as he did. But," added he, "all he has gained by

his crying is the nick-name of Lord Feel-licks."

"Which I must beg may not be perpetuated," observed the Viscount. "Your bruises are long effaced, but a name of that kind may stick to a man through life—I confess the joke to be rather tempting." Then turning to me, he said, "I have heard much of you from William, and have received a corroboration of his opinion from my old friend the Count: but I fear these holydays it will not be in my power to receive you at the castle, as Lady Toryville intends to pass the summer in Scotland. At some future time I hope to be more fortunate."

He then took me aside, and asked me many questions about my previous life. Having satisfied himself on these points, he slipped a guinea into my hand, took leave of all, and in a few minutes departed with his son.

In a day or two Mr. and Mrs. Birchell proceeded to the sea-side, entrusting me to the care of Nibshort, from whom I escaped the greater part of the day to pass my time in studying and playing the violin with M.

de Florennes. The kindness of the latter, and my love for him, increased daily, so that, if I had not been constantly tormented by the usher, I should have begun to consider school as a tolerably happy portion of my life.

CHAPTER VIII.

Black Monday—Where be your gibes now? your gambols? quite chap-fallen?—I am encouraged to be punctual by the present of a watch—This does not prevent Nibshort from marking time no less punctually upon my fingers—Bathos and pathos illustrated by diver experiments upon my antipodes—I had met with many crosses, but never with one of silver—M. de Florennes' observations thereon—Can a duck swim?

The grievous day of tears and tender partings too soon returned—the blissful weeks of home and idleness were sped—the "printing press" was replenished with a fresh set of birchen types, and Nibshort had furnished himself with what he termed a new sugar-stick, whose saccha-

rine matter was principally reserved for my shoulders. Saturated with prawns and boiled whiting, and thinking themselves as fortunate in having seen a shipwreck, as their young daughters were in picking up a store of sea-weed and cuttle-fish, the ichthyological family of Birchell returned to Thistle-house, and anxiously awaited the arrival of the boys; not without some misgivings, however, as to the remonstrances that might be made by parents at the enormous extra charges which, under Mrs. Birchell's fruition, swelled the half-yearly accounts to double the original prospectus.

But how different was the return of my youthful comrades from their departure! Mute, crest-fallen, and with flagging steps, they descended from the different vehicles. With tears in their eyes and bulls'-eyes in their mouths, they exchanged a mournful, half-sulky greeting with me as I stood merrily whistling upon the steps. Then, after presenting themselves and their letters to Mrs. Birchell, they sauntered away, some to display their new clothes and marbles, others to exhibit their pocket-money,

and the rest to solace themselves with sucking oranges and devouring the pastry with which they had been furnished by their provident mammas, who thought the best way of lightening their hearts was by loading their stomachs —a practice highly applauded by the Salisbury apothecary, who disposed of more black doses and calomel in ten days after the vacation than during the whole remaining school-time. And this, in despite of Mrs. Birchell's ingenious alimentary device of cramming the boys with half-boiled rice by way of powder, and then ramming down the charge with a wadding of ill-cooked mutton.

"But to everything there is a season—a time to weep and a time to laugh." Ere forty-eight hours the monotonous routine of theories, derivations, construing, hexameters and pentameters, moved on as if it had never been interrupted. The school-room again re-echoed with crocodile lamentations, and the play-fields with genuine bursts of merriment. Home and all its joys were for a time forgotten.

Many of the boys, whose parents deemed it

a grievous hardship to compel their darlings to open a book during the holydays, had contrived to forget the greater part of what Mr. Birchell had whipped into them during the previous quarter; the vacation thus producing upon their minds the same effect as the night upon the chaste Penelope's tapestry. This was not the case with me. I had been allowed no respite, nor did I seek it. But the progress I made, especially in history, geography, arithmetic and mathematics, which the classical pedagogue considered of minor importance, seemed to surprise him and his wife much less than the increasing friendship of William Toryville and the kindness of his father—a surprise that augmented still more, when they heard that the latter had sent me a new silver hunting watch, to which was appended a seal and ribbon, as a gift from Delphine to her brother's friend.

I question if ever I was so happy as at the sight of this present. I gazed at it with as much admiration as if it had been the Pitt diamond. I turned it over and over, and

looked with indescribable pleasure at the initials P. P. engraved upon the case. I touched the spring fifty times in as many seconds with my thumb. I uplifted the inner cover, and cautiously peeped at the works, fearing lest my breath should tarnish their brilliancy. Then returning it to its leather cover, to be re-extracted in another minute, I anxiously longed for bed-time that I might wind it up. I had passed more than one sleepless night from sorrow, it was the first during which I remained awake from pleasure. Whether it was mere spite on Nibshort's part, who hated me the more for this proof of the Viscount's liberality, or whether I paid less attention to the feet of my verses than to the hands of my watch, I know not; but, alas! the implacable usher struck time most regularly with his cane upon my fingers, whenever they approached my fob, and sent me twice to the block for replying to a question in the declensions, "A silver case, sir," instead of *Vocative caret!*

This proof of my young friend's regard was not wanting to inspire me with feelings of

fraternal affection, so that ere long we became as united as if moving by one impulse—a union, by-the-bye, which procured for us the nickname of those inseparables, Mustard and Cress. Although many of the boys were much older than William, he was as many years their superior in manners, conversation, and general information, as they were inferior to him in mildness and amiable disposition. He was a frail creature in body; but in proportion as his form was feeble so was his mind distinguished for its energy and early power. He accounted for this by saying, "It is a gift of nature, and an unfortunate one too, perhaps, for we often find examples of youthful precocity—Pascal, for instance,—Evelyn's daughter, and many others—but then, alas! they did not live long. Like forced flowers, they blossomed out of season, and fell from their stems ere the sap which nourished more tardy plants had hardly commenced to rise. It must be attributed also, in a great measure, to my father's treatment, which I believe differs from that of most others."

"Alas! I have no parents," said I, "and cannot make any comparisons."

"I only judge from my school-fellows," replied he, "whose fathers behave to them as mere children; but mine lives with me upon the footing of a friend and brother. Though usually cold and formal in his manner, he is slow to discourage, but quick to promote emulation. He always seems desirous that I should be near him. Whenever unoccupied by parliamentary and domestic business, he reads and converses with me upon subjects of history, arts, and literature; and, although I sometimes fall asleep in the midst of his discussions upon political economy, I cannot fail to glean knowledge and improvement from his observations, and those of his friends."

"I can well understand that," rejoined I; "for I already feel myself another being, since I have profited by M. de Florennes' instruction and good example. My mind is enlarged, and my manners are improved. I hope in time you will not have to blush for your friend."

He smiled, and, pressing my hand, continued.

"Besides, although my father exacts the utmost civility and kindness from me towards the servants, he will not allow me to lounge away my time in the steward's room, or the stables, as Springwood and other boys do; nor indeed is that any way my taste. Whether or not Delphine and I are old man and woman before our time, as my step-mother says, matters not, but our greatest pleasure is to ride, drive, and stroll about the grounds with my father, to listen to his conversation, and to hear him explain subjects which tend to improve us. By-the-bye, talking of Lady Toryville," added he, "it is but fair to tell you, that she strongly objected to your coming to the castle. So the subject was abandoned."

This was painful intelligence, and made me imbibe no small dislike against her ladyship; but I kept this to myself, not wishing to increase William's want of cordiality towards his step-mother. Day after day now rolled on with monotonous regularity, but with undiminished vexations upon the part of the Birchells and Nibshort; in truth, they had a fair pretext

latterly for augmenting their ill-usage. The elder boys, who had frequently compelled me to exercise my powers of mimicry on my school-fellows, and had beaten me because I would not imitate M. de Florennes' broken English, induced me, nothing loth, to try my hand one day at taking off the redoubted usher, who had many ridiculous and some almost disgusting peculiarities.

One morning, when I thought myself secure, I put on Nibshort's spectacles, which he had left upon his desk, buttoned up my jacket, plastered down my curly hair, and, imitating his gait and voice, read aloud some doggrel verses, which I had composed in bed, ridiculing both Mrs. Birchell and himself.

"Bravo! read them again! give me a copy!" now resounded from all my juvenile auditors, amidst thunders of applause and clapping of hands. I was about to commence another verse, when the further flashes of my poetical fire were suddenly arrested by a terrific box on the ear from the incensed object of my raillery, who, according to a very laudable custom, had

been listening at the door. Pouncing upon my effusion and my ears, and almost blind with fury, for he had broken his best silver spectacles, Nibshort dragged me forthwith before Mr. and Mrs. Birchell.

To describe the rage of the latter, would be as impossible as to give a just idea of the vigour with which the former revenged upon one extremity of my person the sin committed by the other. He had hitherto most honourably fulfilled his promise of trying to whip prosody into me, he now seemed equally determined to scourge poetry out of me. "I'll cure you for ever of your versification," said he, as he called for a second rod; "yea, verily, although you had swallowed Parnassus, and washed it down with Helicon." This he performed with such energy, that the unfortunate nether man was literally porcupined with birch-buds. It felt, and, I dare say, if I could have effected the injunction of *respice finem*, would have appeared, studded with *ceppi* or wooden points, like the glacis of Cæsar's camps. But with all this, I never cried or flinched, and when I

rose, and was ordered to beg pardon, I boldly declared that they might cut me into pieces, but that I would not say *peccavi* until Nibshort ceased his persecutions.

Heavens, how they did hate me! and how cordially I abhorred them! But it was bad policy on my part to betray my feelings, for the power was in their hands, and they lost no opportunity of making me feel its pressure. Amongst other inventions, Mrs. Birchell adopted an ingenious mode of tormenting me, from which there was no escape. According to the very cleanly customs at schools, the boys were publicly washed upon Saturdays: fifty-two annual purifications being considered quite sufficient for a classical education. Mrs. Birchell, who feared lest the servants should purloin her yellow soap, always presided at these hebdomadal ablutions; and when they were completed, and our hair was half dried, we were required to kneel down before her, and submit to have our heads harrowed, with what she called a small-tooth comb, but which in reality bore much greater resemblance to the yellow fangs that

protruded from her own mouth. I know not whether she was a convert to the doctrines of Dr. Gall; but she seemed to enjoy greater pleasure in raking my bosses, than ever did the most enthusiastic disciple of Spurzheim in fingering De Ville's finest models. Indeed, I wonder that I afterwards preserved my religious sentiments so completely in tact, for she used to scrape at the top of my pericranium, as if her object had been to eradicate the bump of veneration, a process that filled my poor scull with artificial prominences, which might have ruined my reputation in the eyes of a phrenologist.

The winter holidays now drew near. Again the school broke up, and I, as before, remained at Thistle Hall. The anniversary of the day that had wrought so remarkable a change in my destinies approached. The chimings of the church bells, and the carols of the village wakers, announced the eve of the sacred festival. It was a night as beautifully serene and calm as the preceding Christmas had been boisterous. The sight of the preparations, both

in the mansion and at the church, brought to my recollection all the miseries I had endured. When I retired to the large dormitory alone, and in the dark—for Mr. Birchell would not allow me a candle—I trembled; and, as the moon's rays penetrated through the shutters, and the hollow breeze moaned through the long galleries, I almost fancied that I saw the sexton's warning, and heard the wailings of the drowning men: these sensations haunted me during half the night, but at length they wore away, and I arose with eagerness to fulfil the pious duties of the day.

To do Mr. Birchell justice, great attention was paid by him to the religious instruction of his pupils; every effort being made, not only to inspire us with principles of devotion and morality, but to impress us with the conviction that our faith was the only one acceptable in God's sight, and that all other Christians were but deluded idolators. He, like my early friend, the sporting vicar, was an uncompromising churchman, and had a similar interest in up-

holding its privileges. Being a senior fellow of King's College, he held one of its best livings in a distant county, the duties of which were administered by a forty-pound curate, whilst he officiated now and then at Thistleburn church, the advowson of which was in the gift of his patron, Lord Raceinfield. Upon this subject, he was wont to be wondrously magnificent, arguing, by a curious kind of sophistry, that pluralities were essentially beneficial to the community, as being the means of forming a fine school for young curates, and thus giving to the incumbents not only worldly independence, and ample time to devote the fruits of their learning to magisterial duties, but, what he termed the labours of the midnight oil, to the compilation of noble volumes, destined to fight the battles of the true church, and to diffuse the doctrines of regenerated Christianity.

I, however, required no such stimulants, either upon this or any other occasion, to attend to my religious duties; and, indeed, was often scoffed at by the other boys, because I inva-

riably fell upon my knees, night and morning, to offer up thanksgivings for the mercies vouchsafed to me: I could not terminate as they could, by beseeching God's blessing upon "my father and mother, my uncles and my aunts;" but I lifted up my voice in that simple and unaffected language, which I had learned from the worthy pilot, and devoutly implored to be made "an honest lad." I observed that most of the boys either neglected their prayers, or, to save their consciences, mumbled a few words when in bed. But whether it was the force of inward workings, or the example that had been shown me by poor Penguin, I should have thought I merited the rod, so unsparingly dealt to me on other occasions, if ever I omitted this homage to my Maker. My religious feelings were at this period extremely excited, not only by the ordinary sentiments that animate all Christians upon the anniversary of the great dawn of their salvation, but by the remembrance of the awful calamity, which upon that day had deprived me of my earliest protector.

But, alas! because I wept in church, not, God knows, at the touching nature of Birchell's discourse, but at past recollections, Nibshort accused me of hypocrisy, and Mrs. Birchell re-echoed the charge. What was still worse, M. de Florennes had that morning presented me with a silver crucifix of minute dimensions and curious workmanship, which I affixed to my watch-ribbon,—this was held to be a proof of my leaning towards Catholicism, and my good old friend was admonished for seeking my conversion to Papistry, whilst I narrowly escaped being converted into mincemeat by Mr. Birchell, for accepting this "symbol of idolatry."

The real truth was, that if I had any bias one way or another, it was to the simpler rather than to the more gaudy forms of Christian worship. But I should as soon have thought of committing parricide as of renouncing the faith in which I had been reared. On the other hand, although M. de Florennes was fully as much attached to the Roman creed, as Mr. Birchell to that of the Anglican church, he never attempted, in my presence, to touch upon

religious questions, nor to discuss the dogmatic subtleties of either. All he said when Mr. Birchell launched forth against the errors and superstitions of Popery was,—" Each faith, sir, is excellent of its kind; each, I trust, leads to salvation by a different road; each is equally worthy of respect and attachment when maintained within the bounds of its original destination—benevolence, humility, repentance, and universal fellowship. But both deviate from their primitive object,—both must become reprehensible in God's sight when employed as vehicles of persecution or exception. The cross, the symbol of our general faith, should be that of our general fraternity. It is intended as the land-mark of our happiness to come—of our deliverance from the blindness of all errors, and of the enrichment of our darkness with light. It is intended to bring strangers into God's acquaintance, and to make remote foreigners near neighbours. It should cut off discords, conclude leagues of peace, and be the representative of the bounteous Author of all good. It is in that light, and that light only,

that I would have my young friend regard my trifling present. In former times," continued he, "when theological questions formed the subject of discussion in the councils of my sovereign, I was one of the first, perhaps, of the few who raised their voices against the encroachments and the unflinching tenacity of the church. I wished to uphold the Catholic faith as the established religion of the state, but not to oppress or constrain others. I advocated its supremacy, but objected to its tyranny and individuality, and held it requisite that man's conduct, and not his creed, should be the standard of his eligibility. I spoke in defence of the utmost latitude of conscience, whilst I argued in favour of an acknowledged national faith, as essential to the support of a monarchical government; and he that would advocate any other, must either be a deluded enthusiast or a bad man. The policy of a national creed seems admitted by all European legislators; and we have a further proof of its importance in the conduct of the fortunate usurper, who is now striving to recal my countrymen to rea-

son, and to re-establish the ancient religion of the state in all its splendour. He is compelled to acknowledge, that neither crown nor government can stand without the aid of a paramount church; but he also seems to feel that men's consciences should be left to their own workings, and that if it be not a direct violation of our Saviour's principles, it is an act of flagrant impolicy on the part of a government, to persecute those who differ with us in religious principles. Such doctrines may appear strangely philosophical in the mouth of one who has himself been the victim of excess of latitude, or rather of irreligion; but, whatever may have been my opinions in earlier times, experience has taught me that constraint, no matter whether applied to the press, or to any given mode of worship, is but the surest way of exciting sectarian principles, and of lending additional malevolence to the pens and doctrines of those who might otherwise be restrained within moderate bounds.

"A religion that cannot hold its ground without such repressive aid, or a press that cannot

be curbed without coercive laws, is calculated to produce greater evil to the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and much greater disquietude to governments, than that which is permitted to shape its own course, without other limits than the rational feeling and incitements of man's conscience, and the retributive justice of public opinion. Why did the people tread under foot the church of France? Because the church had so long placed its foot upon the neck of the people. Why does England abound in sectarians, and Ireland in malcontents? Because the Anglican church, with all its boasted tolerance, is equally exclusive in fact as that of Rome is in theory, and because it urges on the government to refuse to a large portion of their fellow-subjects those civil rights which are the birth-right of every Englishman."

Such were the doctrines of the enlightened nobleman, whose opinions were too much neglected at a later period, when the march of events again placed him in a situation to advocate the cause of civil and religious liberty in his own country, and to offer to his sovereign the

fruits of that dearly-bought experience, which the latter seemed to despise as much as if the seeds had been cast into the ocean.

The summer of the third year was now advancing without bringing any alteration in, or throwing any light upon, my destiny. My annual expenses had been regularly paid in advance by the anonymous XX.; but no mention was made of anything else concerning me. I had also heard frequently from the Steers; but, alas! the last letter from the good ladies announced that their brother had been carried off by an inflammatory complaint, and that he had bequeathed all his property to them.

In the meantime, I had acquired no common proficiency in music, and, as regarded my studies, was upon a par with the most advanced boys in the school, except my friend William. Lord Toryville had also frequently repeated his visits, and upon each occasion took much notice of me, questioning me himself, and appearing equally pleased with my rapid improvement, as he was with that of his own son, who, to my utter grief, was destined to be removed to a

private tutor's at the expiration of the summer holidays.

It was within a fortnight of this period, when an event occurred that threw the whole establishment into confusion. At the distance of half a mile from the mansion, there was a stream, which, by the aid of dams and an accumulation of stones, had formed one of the most ornamental portions of the old deer-park. Its waters, after meandering through the meadows, rushed over an artificial fall, and then, flowing through the vale towards the Avon, alimented two or three mills. At a short distance from this mimic cataract, over which the stream poured with dangerous velocity, a space had been railed off and gravelled, forming a spacious bath, where the boys were conducted twice or thrice a week under Nibshort's superintendence. The custom had been continued during some years without accident. It was upon a beautiful afternoon in June, that the usher led his stripling flock, as usual, to the water-side. Grown careless from habit, he sauntered down the stream, and left the joyous,

shouting band to splash and sport at their pleasure. After showing off my dexterity, in the art of which I was a master, by diving, floating, and performing other aquatic feats, I dressed, and wandered into the adjoining copse. Suddenly my attention was aroused by piercing screams: I listened—they were in the direction of the bath. Hastening to the spot, I saw three boys, who had availed themselves of Nibshort's absence to creep outside the palings. They were struggling against the stream, which was fast bearing them towards the fall. At the moment I arrived, one sank, rose again, and again disappeared; another, entangled in the weeds, shouted for help; a third—it was my friend—vainly endeavoured to gain the shore, and raised his hands as if about to sink. To fly to the bank nearest the latter, to bound into the water, and to strike with maddening energy towards him, was but the act of a moment. But he was gone. It was within ten yards of the fall: if borne down by that, death was inevitable. I cared not, and so dived. There he was floating along the mud almost lifeless: five

vigorous strokes brought me to him. I seized him by the hair, and, God be praised, rose to the surface. It was time. We almost touched upon the vortex of the fall. How we escaped Heaven knows; but I dragged him to the bank, where Nibshort and two or three peasants conveyed his inanimate body to the nearest mill.

I was about to follow, half bewildered with the scene, when I turned, and saw the second boy still grasping feebly at the weeds. "Save him! save him! dear, good Penguin!" was the cry of all my schoolfellows. A yell of horror burst forth at the same moment from the terror-stricken children. The boy who had first disappeared was seen to rise feet foremost near the fall. First he turned over, and then hanging for a moment near the ledge, shot like an arrow into the gulf beneath. Although exhausted and sick with alarm, I determined to try and rescue the second, so I threw off my wet jacket, and wading in, swam with all the force I could muster, bidding him hold on to the weeds, and not touch me, lest we should both perish. But, poor boy, he heeded me not. In the agony of

fear and exhaustion he seized me by the neck, and we both sank. I kicked, struck, and plunged with fearful desperation, to rid me of his grasp. It was a struggle for life or death, for one or both: but his hold was that of a vice. My eyes were wide open, his also, but glazing in death: I again made an effort, and he relaxed his hold. It was more than time, for I rose half suffocated. In moments like these, there is no space for thought; I acted by inspiration, and dived again. There he was, caught by the spreading branches of a dead tree, which lay across the stream. I had nothing now to fear: he was motionless, so I seized him by the waist, and pulled him to the surface. The miller and his men threw cords to me. Thank God for it, for I must have perished had they not dragged me out: as it was I fainted, and long remained senseless.

When I recovered, I found myself between two blankets, attended by the miller's wife and family, and to my inexpressible joy the first person who threw his arms around me was William. Merciful Father, how I wept for joy!

I had not only been spared, but had saved a fellow creature, and he my dearest friend. On looking round, the small chamber presented a sad spectacle. There lay the boy whom I had vainly tried to save, gone beyond recovery: there also lay the other, swollen, bruised and dead. Mr. and Mrs. Birchell had arrived, and with them many others, for the alarm had quickly spread. For the first time since I had known them, they grasped my hands, and weeping, thanked me. Even Nibshort, whose carelessness had caused the evil, seemed affected, and loudly praised my conduct. But I wanted no such commendation, my friend's safety was ample recompence.

At length, the bodies were placed on hurdles, and carried towards the house. It was a pitiful sight to watch the mournful convoy slowly winding through the green meadows, where the flowers sparkled in the sun-beams, the birds sang merrily in the hedge-rows, and the gaudy butterflies flaunted through the air. All nature seemed teeming with redoubled life and anima-

tion, as if to cast a stronger shade upon the peasants' burden. Alas! poor children! the dear objects of years of tenderness and care—the pride, the hope, the glory, of their parents—born to high estates and noble destinies,—cut off in the exuberance of joy—blasted in the bright dawn of youthful bloom. But why repine? They had lived long enough to taste the early sweets of life without savouring of the bitterness that lurks beneath. They had died in pain, but not in lingering sadness. They had been beloved and cherished: beyond the trifling sorrows of their age, they had known nothing of the hollow world, its smarts or vanities—that world which rarely affords honour to the meritorious, reward to the laborious, or justice to the good. Had they spun out their career but a few years longer, they might, perhaps, have sought that death in ripened sin, which they had encountered in the full swell of innocence.

One boy was the only child of a wealthy baronet: a hearse was sent to fetch his corpse,

that it might rest with those of his ancestors. The other was the younger son of one of lesser station; his grave was dug in Thistleburn churchyard. There he was buried, and grievously we all wept when the village maids and swains cast flowers upon his coffin, and the earth closed, as the waters had done before, upon his body. It was Sunday, and one of the deceased's relatives, a prebendary of Salisbury, preached a sermon upon the occasion. Whether it was his own composition or not, matters little. Some parts excited deep emotion amongst the congregation, and my heart thrilled when with expressive gesture, and solemn voice, he terminated thus: "What is there in youth, wealth, noble descent, or glorious hopes? where is now his laughter? where his mirth? what avails now his parents' tenderness, or his preceptors' care? From how much gladness to how much sorrow! after how much joy, to how much desolation! from how great expectations, to how much nothingness, is he sunken! But, what has befallen him, may occur to you. You are of earth, you live of earth, and you shall

return to earth. Your lives are but as the transient bubble on the passing stream. Death awaits you everywhere—be good, be just, be wise, therefore, and be prepared for death, that he may not surprise you like one sleeping at his post.

CHAPTER IX.

My prospects brighten, but the morning soon lours and the dawn is overcast—How to love thy neighbour as thyself—What now?—A rat behind the arras—Nibshort sets a trap, and catches me in his toils—I take French leave of all but my French friend.

On the morning after the funeral William received congratulatory letters from his father and sister, with one from each to me. The first was couched in terms of manly gratitude and praise, the other, in all the ingenuous candour of youthful innocence and sisterly affection, placed no bounds to her admiration, and talked of loving me —as a brother, I suppose. What else could she dream of, or I either? she was but fourteen, I a

year older, and we had never met. Nay, had I been of riper years, or ever thought of love, I had not dared imagine, that one so fair, so noble, would cast a tenderer thought than that of gratitude upon such as I. And yet, strange to say, I felt a beating at my heart, a vague, undefinable emotion, when Delphine's name was mentioned, which I could neither comprehend nor account for.

In four days more Lord Toryville himself arrived to carry home my friend. After the first effusions of parental tenderness, he sent for me, and greeted me as the saviour of his son—his only son. "Judge," said he to Mr. Birchell, "what are my feelings—how great my debt of obligation. Had it not been for this gallant boy's devotion, I had been bereft of my life's pride. The half of my estates would be but a feeble recompence." Then turning to me he added, "Henceforth, my young friend, I shall consider you as my adopted son, and shall hold myself responsible for your advancement. Whatever your guardians, or your position in life may be, I flatter myself you will not have to repent you of this act."

My heart was too full to permit my answering, but I quivered from head to foot, with ecstasy and hope. The generous nobleman perceived my emotion, and pressing my hand said, "Although I can offer you no adequate return for the life of my child, I have not only taken care that the public should know to whom William is indebted for that life, but I begged permission to communicate the details to the king, and here are testimonials that the best and bravest might be proud to receive. This," continued he, exhibiting a silver medal, "is from that noble institution the Humane Society; and this," drawing forth a gold one, "from his most gracious majesty. Merit and humanity, no matter of what age or condition, are sure to meet with encouragement from him, and his majesty could not have conferred a greater obligation upon the most humble, though not the least devoted of his servants, than by distinguishing one, but for whose courage that servant would have been bereft of his only son—one, who boldly risked his own life, whilst others stood aghast." And he looked significantly and almost sternly at

Nibshort. The Viscount now requested the school might be assembled, that he might deliver the medals to me in their presence. He then addressed a few touching sentences to the boys, who clapped their hands, and cheered me. These were moments of delicious joy not to be purchased by gold. I cannot recur to this scene, even now, without feeling a thrilling sensation which elevates me above myself. It was my first successful step on the ladder of ambition.

Although my parting with my generous protector and his son was bitterly painful, my grief was softened by an assurance that we should soon meet at Hawthorn Castle. But here again I was doomed to disappointment. At the moment I was eagerly expecting a letter to fix the day for my visit, Mr. Birchell received intelligence that William was dangerously ill. The fatal accident had produced a low fever and harassing cough, which acting rapidly upon his fragile frame, threatened consumption. Immediate change of air was considered essential. Madeira was selected, and ere the holidays

were past Lord Toryville and his family sailed for that last deceptive anchorage of enfeebled life. I was at the same time apprized that a cornetcy of dragoons was reserved for me, upon my attaining what was supposed to be my sixteenth year, and Mr. Birchell was requested to communicate the offer to my anonymous guardian. Three months elapsed without an answer, and then it was laconically negative, and ended thus: "It is intended that Peregrine Penguin shall eventually proceed to India as a writer. This situation being procured for him, he must thenceforth rely upon his own resources. Further instructions will be transmitted in due season."

Nearly a year had elapsed, and I awaited with anxiety the time destined to witness my departure for a distant land, where I might perhaps amass a splendid fortune, as many others had done before me, by malversation and intrigue, or, if honest, return with a trifling independence, but in either case with a shattered constitution, and then end my days an unknown stranger, as I had commenced them a neglected

outcast. Much as this tended to blight my cherished hopes, I determined, by M. de Florenne's advice, to prepare myself as much as possible for my new vocation. I therefore procured a few books necessary for the study of the eastern languages, and laboured hard to overcome the first difficulties.

It chanced one rainy day that I strolled through the upper galleries of the mansion with my Hindoostanee grammar, and entered a remote chamber forbidden to the boys. Here I was hard at work trying to produce sounds from my throat, some of which represented water gurgling from the neck of a narrow bottle, others the harsh barytone of the peacock before rain, and others the creaking of rusty hinges or amorous frogs, when I heard approaching footsteps, which I recognised as those of Mrs. Birchell and Nibshort. Fearing that I should be maltreated if discovered in this apartment, I jumped up, and, as my evil genius would have it, secreted myself in a closet, where I hoped to remain secure until the peril was past. In an instant more the worthy couple entered, and the first words I

heard were, "Dear me, there are my keys. How could I forget them? I dare say the boys or servants have robbed me already." She then approached evidently intending to secure the lock. A pretty dilemma for me—my only alternative being to submit to incarceration with the mice, or to deliver myself into the lion's jaws. My attention was, however, someway directed from my own predicament by hearing Nibshort close the room-door and say, "I thank this forgetfulness, for affording me one more opportunity of once more opening my heart to you. I have long sought to escape the prying eyes of the boys, and, above all, of the odious bastard. Yes, I hate them all, and him above all others. But if he was odious to me before, he has been loathsome ever since he dared to insult you with his ribald verses. But I will have my revenge. Enough of this, however; and now, madam, to the point—I will not be trifled with."

"Good God!" replied the lady, "if any one should hear you? Hark, what noise was that?"

I held my breath, partly from fear and partly from astonishment at this strange discourse.

"Be not alarmed," answered Nibshort, "here we are safe. Now—you know the conditions upon which I became an inmate of this house. Have you forgotten your promises before and after marriage?"

"No," rejoined Mrs. Birchell; "but what would you have me do? Would you force me to abandon my good name—my children?"

"Yes," retorted the other. "Do you attach any value to my life?"

"Too much! too much!" was the reply.

"Well, then," said he, "fulfil your promise, and we will fly to America."

"Not yet, not yet, I implore you," answered Mrs. Birchell. "Be patient, be calm. You have my secret and my promise. But," added she, sighing, "what have you to offer in return for my loss of reputation, and my money?—we must starve."

"Starve!" exclaimed Nibshort; "you have ten thousand pounds left you by your uncle,

and I—but even if I had no resources, is not my constant love, with freedom and happiness in a land of liberty, sufficient?"

"What would my noble relatives say," rejoined the dame, "if I were guilty of an act that would bring disgrace upon their names?"

"Say!" retorted the other, with a sneering tone, and, I dare say, a diabolical expression, "why, that you had followed the example of many a noble lady, who had less excuse for it than you. Did not Lady Raceinfield's sister fly from her home, her children, and all that made life glorious to the eye, and throw herself into the arms of the man she loved? Could I not mention twenty others equally noble, who have cast off the cold trammels of worldly ties, and joined their destinies to those who have embellished their existence with a diadem of joy?"

"No, no," retorted Mrs. Birchell, "with a crown of thorns. How have they been rewarded? With the world's scorn; with the upbraidings of their own consciences; with ig-

nominy, poverty, and a broken-hearted death; —and you would have me encounter this?"

As ill-luck would have it, my curiosity got the better of my discretion, and, being desirous to see as well as to hear this dialogue, of which, however, I did not comprehend half the wickedness, I stooped towards the key-hole, and in so doing, touched a pile of mops and brooms, the whole of which fell clattering on the floor. "Good God, what is that?—there is some one in the closet," exclaimed Mrs. Birchell; "I am lost." In an instant more, Nibshort sprang to the door, opened it, and discovered me.

There was I, shaking with terror; and there was he, his hands clenched, his nostrils expanded, and his livid visage swelling with malignity, vice, and avarice; for it was evident he only wished to lure the infatuated woman to her ruin, in order to obtain possession of her ten thousand pounds. I expected to be felled to the ground; but, as I stood watching his eye, his features relaxed into a bitter grin, and with consummate effrontery, he turned round to Mrs. Birchell, and said, "There, madam, you

will now believe me when I told you that this eavesdropping scum of a workhouse was in the habit of watching my steps. Now, sir," continued he, "you have probably heard me say I hated you, and would be revenged for your insolence. Look to yourself, then; and mind, if ever you breathe one syllable of what has passed, you will rue the day. Go, sir, go to the school-room, and think yourself fortunate you are not flogged." He then gave his hand to Mrs. Birchell, who appeared nearly as much astonished as I was, and departed. Utterly bewildered at his boldness, I obeyed in silence, and, from fear of his vengeance, kept the whole adventure secret, even from M. de Florennes.

This preyed upon my spirits, and gave me a downcast, unhappy air, that was remarked by some of the boys; but I attempted to account for it by my sorrow at the idea of going to India without seeing my friend William, who still remained abroad. During the next two months, my melancholy increased on observing that many of my comrades appeared to grow shy of me; even the servants, with whom

I had hitherto been a favourite, were rude and neglectful, and seemed to watch my steps. I had injured no one, offended no one, and could, therefore, noways account for this change: but the mystery was too soon, too fatally cleared up.

One morning, about three weeks before the period that was destined to see me exchange this life of native bondage for one of distant banishment, Birchell entered the school-room, and, having assembled all the inmates of the house, bade me stand forth, and thus addressed his auditors:—"It is with deep regret upon the one hand, and equal satisfaction on the other, that I have to announce the discovery of the person through whose criminality the innocent have been so long suspected, and the credit of this establishment injured."

All eyes were now turned upon me, and, although I little anticipated what was in store for me, I was overwhelmed with bodements of some deadly misfortune, and sickened with very anguish.

"Being unwilling, in a matter of such gra-

vity," continued Mr. Birchell, "to move with precipitation, I have refrained from acting upon the *aura popularis* and the insinuations which have reached me. *Ex facto jus oritur*; and I have patiently waited until such positive evidence should be brought home to the real culprit as would justify my proceedings. There!" said he, raising his voice, and pointing his finger, "there he stands: Peregrine Penguin! I here openly accuse you of robbery — robbery of money!"

"Robbery! money, sir!" exclaimed I, starting up with surprise and just indignation.

"Yes, Penguin," replied he, "of a crime, which, according to the laws of your country, is punished with death or transportation."

Although I was nearly dropping with shame and agony, and found my tongue clinging to my mouth, I answered, "Indeed, indeed, I am innocent; I never robbed any one of the smallest trifle,—upon my word—upon my oath I have not."

"To deny the charge were useless," replied Birchell, "the proofs are in our possession.

Mr. Nibshort, you will be pleased to state the facts, and then we will call other witnesses to substantiate your evidence. As the guardian of the young noblemen and gentlemen confided to my charge, I am bound to watch over their honour; as a minister of God and a magistrate, I am no less enjoined to look to the protection of the innocent, and the due execution of justice."

Nibshort now stepped forward, and said, "You are aware, sir, that Mrs. Birchell and I, having motives for suspecting Penguin, watched him into the attics, and there found him secreted in the store-closet."

Desperate from my situation, I exclaimed, "Yes, yes! it is true; and you know that I heard you say wicked things to Mrs. Birchell, and that is your reason for persecuting me."

"Silence!" roared out Mr. Birchell, in a voice of thunder; "silence, you unblushing reprobate."

Nibshort cast a look of ineffable contempt upon me, and proceeded, "I forewarned you, sir, that this abandoned boy would immediately

attempt to repeat the vile insinuations, which he dared to hint at in his flagitious verses."

"For which he received too trifling a flagellation; but do not distress yourself, my dear Jane," said Mr. Birchell, turning to his wife, who was now getting up an hysteric, "we shall deal with him as he merits. *Sus. per col.*, instead of *flag. per pos.*, ought to be his reward. Proceed, Nibshort, and be not deterred from stating the whole truth of the effrontery of this daring reprobate."

"Having strong circumstantial evidence of his guilty purpose——"

"I have direct proofs of yours, you wicked man!" rejoined I, half frantic with his iniquity, "I swear to God ——"

"Blasphemer!" ejaculated the deluded schoolmaster; "beware that the vengeance of your Maker do not anticipate that of your master: so much youthful perversity I never witnessed."

Viewing me with an eye of triumphant malignity, Nibshort shrugged up his shoulders, and continued, "Having strong grounds for suspecting him to have carried his depredations

to the most culpable extent, I resolved, in concert with Mrs. Birchell, Lord Felix, and one or two other boys, to take measures that might lead to a discovery ; I consequently adopted the common stratagem of marking some pieces of money, which, as usual, were left in my desk and those of the parties to our scheme. In a few days they were gone, and we have traced them to his possession, and thus clearly detected the criminal."

"*Decidit in casses præda petita tuos*," exclaimed the inveterate pedagogue.

"Into my possession, sir!" said I: "how can you accuse me of such a horrid crime, when I can account for every shilling I ever received or spent?"

"We shall see that," replied Birchell: "Mr. Nibshort, please to state what were the monies you marked?"

"A guinea of my own, a seven-shilling piece, and one or two smaller coins."

"Oh," said I, brightening up, "thank God! I can prove my innocence. All the money I ever had, except my weekly allowance, I

changed at the bookseller's at Salisbury. It was a guinea and a seven-shilling piece; the one was given me by a captain in the navy, and the other by Lord Toryville: I hoarded them both as keepsakes. Send to Salisbury—look into my box and desk—search my person and clothes—ask the boys."

A dozen voices now roared out, "We never saw him with any gold, until he went with us all to Salisbury a few days past. We have long suspected him of being a thief. John and Springwood saw him change the money."

And Lord Felix and the servant having corroborated this assertion, Mr. Birchell now exclaimed, "Call in Mr. Typeson, the bookseller." Then, taking a seven-shilling piece and guinea from his pocket, he said to the latter, "Do you know anything of these two coins?"

"Yes, sir," replied the stationer, "I know these by a small mark upon the edge; they were changed at my shop by Master Penguin. I, with other tradesmen, being cautioned by Mrs. Birchell to examine any money offered by the young gentlemen, I took particular no-

tice, and retained them until I placed them in your hands this morning."

"O Mr. Typeson!" said I; "for God's sake speak the truth; do not be unmerciful to a friendless lad; do not say I changed any marked coin. There is some mistake, indeed there is."

"I am very sorry, Master Penguin," answered the tradesman; "but I have spoken the truth. You changed those identical pieces of gold."

"Unhappy boy!" exclaimed Mr. Birchell; "it were better to confess your guilt, than add falsehood to crime. Nibshort, you said some other money had been traced to him also."

"Yes, sir," replied the usher, "we have found it in his box, together with some objects of less value belonging to the servants."

"What!" said Birchell, "rob the servants—fie upon him, fie upon him!"

Shouts of thief, thief, hisses, and groans of indignation, burst forth from the by-standing boys, whilst groans of bitter anguish re-echoed from my bosom. It was in vain that I pro-

tested, and swore upon my knees to my innocence; it was in vain that I appealed to one and the other to speak for me,—all failed. Thus I stood a convicted thief. By what agency the marked money had been substituted in my desk for my own, or how the other articles came into my box, I could not imagine; but there they were, and I was lost. But my cup of misery was not yet filled. Mr. Birchell having commanded silence, addressed me as follows:—"Penguin, you have heard the evidence against you, and you have sworn to your innocence. Facts are, unfortunately, more powerful than protestations. I pity, but cannot pardon you: remission would be an encouragement to further crime. I will not, however, pursue the affair to the extreme of the law; but an example is necessary. My school must no longer be contaminated by your presence. I shall this day communicate my resolve and its motive both to your anonymous guardian and to Lord Toryville, of whose protection you are now unworthy. It is not enough to be brave, it is essential to be honest. I have a duty,

a painful duty to perform, and shall not shrink from it. I therefore expel you—publicly, ignominiously expel you. You will remain in a separate room until you are removed; and I trust in God this terrible warning will serve for the rest of your life. You are expelled."

But Nibshort's implacable malice was not yet appeased. As soon as Mr. Birchell had concluded, he said, "Sir, I regret to oppose your decision, but I am prosecutor in this matter in my own behalf, and on that of Lord Felix Springwood. I therefore demand of you as a magistrate to look to the execution of the law—of that law which recognises no distinction between high or low, rich or poor. Had this theft been perpetrated by a servant, he would have been relentlessly abandoned to the hands of justice. I expect, then, that the law should take its course, and, if you refuse, I shall appeal elsewhere for a warrant. In short, I demand that the culprit be sent to jail for trial."

I had hitherto stood with my hands crossed, trembling and bewildered, but when the word jail struck upon my ear, nature could no more,

and I fainted. When I recovered, I found myself alone with one of the servants, who said he had orders to convey me and my clothes to a solitary room at the top of the house, and that I was to remain there until his master consulted with a brother magistrate. But as Nibshort had determined to have me brought to trial, there was no doubt the constables would come for me next morning. "Although," said the man, who seemed touched with my situation, "I no more believe you did it than I knows Latin. But I durst not say what I thinks. I have heard of these rigs before, but I can't prove it, only I have my misgivings." He then conducted me to my destined room, and left me to all the horrors of despair.

The evening was closing in when, at length, M. de Florennes entered, saying he had permission to visit and bring me some refreshment. But I could not eat, though if he had offered me poison I could have swallowed it. I was weary of life. "O sir," said I, after we had exchanged a few words, "is it possible that you —you who know my heart, and have seen all

my actions, can you believe me guilty? This is a wicked plot of Nibshort's;" and I then narrated what I heard in the closet. When I had finished, he placed his hands upon my head affectionately, and said, "God help thee, poor boy! I do not think you guilty—that is impossible. But what are the conviction or intercessions of a poor foreigner against the fatal evidence which, I doubt not, has been brought about by the machination of your avowed enemy? Your assertions cannot gainsay facts, nor my testimony to your exemplary conduct disarm the law. It may mitigate punishment, but not avert trial. Whatever may be the nature of my surmises, I have no proofs, and cannot sustain them. All I can do is to write to Lord Toryville, and your guardian, and, in the meantime, I entreat you to support this calamity with fortitude. If Mr. Birchell has the heart of a Christian he also will intercede. Indeed, to do him justice, he has already essayed, but Nibshort remains implacable—and I fear you must be prepared to suffer the full extent of his malice."

"Never, never, sir," said I in a paroxysm of despair,—"never—I will sooner die than submit to such disgrace," and, in a moment of reckless excitement I jumped upon a chair near the window and should have precipitated myself into the court beneath, had not the count sprung forward, and seizing me by the collar, hurled me backwards into the room; then looking at me with a stern but melancholy air, he apostrophised me thus —"Rash boy! are these the fruits of my instructions? Are these the workings of an innocent and upright conscience? Are these the proofs of your duty to the divine Saviour of the world? If you would have me still think you guiltless, banish this insane purpose, inspired by the accursed enemy of mankind. Live, and learn to bend your head to the strokes of fortune, to the dispensations of Providence. Come," added he, extending his hand, and addressing me in a more kindly tone, "come, my poor child, fall upon your knees. Pray to the Almighty dispenser of all good—pray to our blessed Saviour—pray for pardon, for strength and courage. Let conscious innocence

console you. This is one of the many bitter trials that you are doomed to endure in this life of misery and strife. Pray, then, for fortitude to support them. Trust in God, he will deliver you from the toils of the wicked."

I obeyed, and prayed fervently, whilst he stood by, gazing benignly upon me. Tears came to my relief. I felt more calm, and said, "Sir, I promise to renounce this terrible temptation, but how can I support the agony of such disgrace? I am lost—lost for ever."

M. de Florennes then seated himself by my side, and exerted his utmost endeavours to inspire me with resignation. After promising to visit me early in the morning, he embraced me affectionately, and left me to cast myself upon my wretched pillow.

It was in vain, however, that I tried to compose myself—it was in vain that I endeavoured to summon courage to encounter the ignominious fate that awaited me. To be expelled—publicly expelled as a disgrace to the school, was horrible; but to be delivered into the hands of jailors, and branded as a common thief, was insup-

portable. The loss of life was nothing compared with that of character, to that of the esteem of Lord Toryville and my early friends; of all, in short, that I prized most dearly. For more than two hours I walked to and fro in my chamber, haunted by the terror of chains and judges, wringing my hands in the frensy of desolation, until at last the temptation to self-murder again assailed me. But when I approached the window, and gazed at the dizzy depth beneath, and cast my eye upon the bright, calm firmament above, twinkling with a thousand stars, the glorious evidences of God's power, the greater dread of his curse and of eternal death came upon me, and I withdrew, shuddering.

Of a sudden, another project burst upon me; I thought of escaping. How or where I cared not. But to fly I was determined, and this, without acquainting M. de Florennes, lest he should attempt to deter me. Hateful as the sea was, I hoped to make my way to the coast, to conceal my name and to get a berth on board some ship. Anything was preferable to the

agony of being convicted as a felon. So soon, therefore, as the boys had retired to rest, and the house was wrapped in sleep, I took off my shoes, put the bread and cheese brought to me by M. de Florennes, together with a small bundle of linen, into a handkerchief, and, with a palpitating heart and throbbing pulse opened the door and glided down the stairs. Here my progress had like to have been arrested, for I could not find the door-key, but at length I succeeded in unfastening a window, and darted into the fields in an opposite direction to Salisbury. After pausing awhile to guide myself by the stars, I continued running several miles in what I concluded was the way towards the sea-coast. At length, being exhausted with fatigue, I crept into a barn that stood by the side of a meadow, and climbing to the top of the straw, for a time forgot my miseries in sleep.

END OF VOL. I.

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